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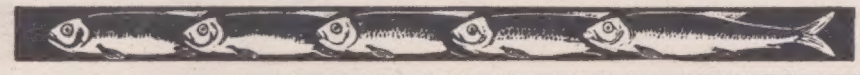

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The PASSING SHOW
No.221. Vol. 5. JUNE 13.1936

Long Complete Story by

BEN AMES WILLIAMS

Mat looked back and saw M'Lord bareheaded by the little cairn.

The Noble Lord

ALL fishermen, of course, are liars; yet sometimes innocently so. One who goes to New Brunswick to fish for salmon—which pound for pound is quite as expensive as nightingales' tongues — may deliberately conceal from his wife the cost of the trip; but when he enlarges upon the size and numbers of his fish, and the difficulty of their capture, he is often as much deceived by his own glamorous memories as are his hearers by his words.

But the noble lord, the Earl of Postilby, lied with intent. He wrote to Jack Thompson that he would come to fish for salmon; and this was simply not true. Yet Jack believed him, and—since it is Jack's business and pleasure to lead fishermen to fish—he made every preparation to give the noble lord good sport, and on the appointed day drove fifty miles to meet the earl's train.

The noble lord proved to be a tall, somewhat stooped young man with a pale wisp of moustache and a weary eye behind his monocle. M'Lord—the appellation, from the first, appeared to fit him like an old glove—said: "Hah!" to Jack's greeting; and when they were upon the road, M'Lord appeared to sleep till they came to the river and Jack's camp.

At the dinner table—M'Lord had dressed—Jack opened a discussion of plans. The season was late, but there were still fish in the river; and for M'Lord, Jack had been able to secure the courtesies of certain sacred pools on club waters. "So even if it is late," Jack promised, "you ought to kill some salmon."

"Hah, yes!" M'Lord barked, and he blinked behind his monocle. "Heard of a chap once," he said vaguely, "who went up this river and across to another and came down that?" He looked at Jack inquiringly.

"You'd have to go by canoe," Jack explained. "You wouldn't get many salmon in the upper waters, and the trip would take about three weeks."

"Good," said M'Lord. "I'll do that. Start to-morrow."

Jack was a little dismayed to have his plans so abruptly overthrown. He protested mildly: "You wouldn't get much fishing, M'Lord." And, thinking of the other's mountain of luggage, considering practical difficulties, he added: "You'd have to take two or three canoes."

"Rubbish!" M'Lord protested without heat. "Not such an ass as I look, you know. Had no notion what I'd need, so I brought the lot, that's all. Let you pick and choose, leave the rest here."

Jack began to suspect that his preconceptions about M'Lord had been wrong. Studying the other man, he realized suddenly that though M'Lord peered sleepily through his monocle, bobbing his long neck in a fashion curiously like that of a near-sighted camel, yet his cheek was bronzed. Not merely sunburned, or tanned, but deeply coloured, as though M'Lord were used to long exposure to the sun; no novice in the wilderness.

Yet Jack was worried, conscious of his responsibility for M'Lord's safety. "Ever travel in a canoe?"

"Done a bit of punting on the Thames; handle a pole and all that."

Jack did not smile. "I see. Done much fishing?"

Now, Jack himself had hunted and fished in most countries where good hunting and fishing can be had; and this simple question set them off upon a two-hour exchange of experiences. Jack had made three African safaris; it developed that M'Lord had shot his elephant, his lion and his buffalo—and been mauled by a leopard besides.

Each had killed his tiger; and each had harled for salmon in Norwegian fiords, and each had lost tackle to the fierce trout of New Zealand, and tried for deep-sea monsters off the coasts there, and taken trout in Kashmir, and mahseer in India, and had sport with red steenbras and with white off Capetown. M'Lord had caught dorado in the Uruguay, and Jack had not, and heard those great tales enviously, and the long talk ran on and on, till Jack said at last, respectfully:

"Well, M'Lord, you've certainly covered some territory. Must be pretty keen at it."

M'Lord barked sharply, in that way he had. "Hah!" he said. "No! Not half! But my father was, in his day. I've been trying to find out what the old gentleman saw in it, that's all. Been following his back track for six years now. Everywhere he went." He added, in a different tone: "He came up here, twenty odd years ago. Thought I'd try it myself, that's all."

"Twenty years? That would be before my day," Jack remarked. "But the old-timers will remember him. He'd be—— Well, everyone would have known about him."

M'Lord looked at him in a curiously blank fashion. "No, not likely," he said. "He was the younger son, y'know. The last earl was my uncle. Bachelor. My father never succeeded to the title."

Jack nodded sympathetically. "I see. He must have been a sportsman, your father."

M'Lord said briefly, "Don't remember much about him."

Jack, like most men used to the wilderness, is quick to trust those vague, intangible feelings, hunches, call them what you please, which all men occasionally feel. He understood that M'Lord did not care for further talk about his father. Also, he had an uneasy certainty that he had heard something discreditable, somewhere, long ago, about the brother of the old earl; so he did not pursue the subject. They turned to the immediate business at hand—the selection of duffel and gear to go in the canoe.

M'Lord had half a dozen salmon rods, tremendous weapons fifteen, seventeen, twenty feet long; but Jack, after he had inspected them, said doubtfully:

"They're bigger than we use up here. They're built for bank fishing in your English rivers; but here we fish from a canoe, or sometimes wade. Have you anything smaller?"

M'Lord nodded. "I've a small rod my father had made to use one-handed, after he lost his hand, y'know. But, of course, he never used it."

And he brought out the rod in question. It proved to be a full thirteen feet long; too heavy to cast with one hand unless the user were a giant of a man. But it would have to serve. Jack was too good a fisherman to lend a rod, and M'Lord was a man of too much sensibility to borrow one.

After Jack was abed that night he began vaguely to suspect that M'Lord was not wholly intent upon

(continued on next page)

Continuing

The Noble Lord

Wet to the waist and furiously angry, he scrambled over the gunwale. The salmon was a small one.

catching salmon; and he wondered a little what was in the other's mind.

He would remember M'Lord's remark that his father had lost one hand.

Next morning the noble lord settled his long legs in the bow of Mat Houston's canoe; and Mat shoved off, set his pole, and thrust the bow upstream. There was no better guide than Mat anywhere on the river.

"But all the same, Mat," Jack had urged this morning, "watch yourself. Don't take chances; and —don't let him get himself into a jam. If anything happened to him, it would give the whole province a black eye."

Mat grinned reassuringly. "What could happen?" he challenged. "Nothing to hurt a man, anywhere up here."

"You'll hit some bad water," Jack reminded him. "If it rains, Two-mile Sluice is bad. If the water's over the split rock, make him walk down the bank."

Mat spat and nodded. "I'll dry-nurse him like a sick kitten, Jack," he promised. "I'll make him wash behind the ears, keep his teeth brushed and everything."

Jack smiled secretly. He himself had at first appraised M'Lord contemptuously—as Mat did now; and he thought Mat might learn a lesson before his weeks of daily contact with M'Lord were done. Also, he considered sharing with Mat his suspicion that M'Lord had in coming here some secret purpose; but he decided against doing so, said only :

"Well, I'm holding you responsible."

Mat grinned and said : "Sure, be easy." Nevertheless, as he poled the canoe steadily up river, he took for a while more than usual care—and as a natural consequence he grounded on rocks that should not have been where they were, and lost his grip on the bottom in little runs that should have been ridiculously simple; and before the morning was half done he was sweating hot and breathing hard.

The worst of it was, M'Lord hardly spoke. He sat in the bow and puffed a great pipe, and stared straight ahead; and when Mat now and then said some word—"See the buck on the bank ahead!" "There's a young muskrat in that eddy!" "Woodchuck on that dead log!" "A good salmon rose in the bend!"—M'Lord said only : "Hah!" and puffed his pipe a little harder. That was all.

But at noon Mat put the canoe's nose against the bank and stepped ashore to boil the kettle, and M'Lord, surprisingly, began to talk a little. Not much, but that little was better than silence.

He said : "Cabins along the river?"

"Sporting camps, and the guardians' shanties," Mat explained, and—grateful for a chance to talk—he added : "There's a guardian on every two miles of river till we get above clug waters."

"Guardians?"

"Sure," Mat agreed. "They've got a system. Each one makes a report, once a week, on every canoe that passes, up or down. That way, the chief can check and be sure his men are on the job. If Wes Hunt and Jim Ferguson both saw us pass, and Pat Howes, in between them, missed us, the chief will be after Pat to know where he was when we came by."

M'Lord puffed his pipe, and Mat dropped a handful of tea into the boiling water and set it off the fire; he propped bread to toast, and M'Lord asked :

"They'd know if a man came up river—say twenty years ago? Or—eight, or ten?"

"Dunno as they keep the records," Mat confessed, made a little curious by the other's tone. "Not that long. But if he took a fish, they'd know it."

"Hah!" said M'Lord, and ate his toast and bacon and jam and drank his tea, and they went on.

In mid-afternoon M'Lord asked : "Man named Courtney? Did he come up here, a few years ago?"

Mat climbed the pole, recovered, set it again before he answered. "Don't remember him," he reflected. "And I've been on the river since I was fourteen. That's thirteen years. I might not know the name."

"He might not use it," M'Lord confessed.

"Why wouldn't he?" Mat asked; but M'Lord did not answer, and Mat was sorry for his question.

At half-past four they went ashore and landed the gear, and then pushed off again to try for a salmon at the head of a still pool. At half after five, Mat put in to the bank again.

"I'll get the tent up, and we'll eat, and try them after," he explained.

M'Lord made no protest; and he watched Mat pitch the tent. Then Mat went into the brush for a load of browse for M'Lord's bed; and when he returned M'Lord had launched the canoe, anchored it in position, and was casting.

Mat called sharply : "Better come ashore, M'Lord. There's a trick to handling a canoe!"

"Done some punting on the Thames," M'Lord retorted, and cast, and his rod bowed beautifully. "I'm into him," he said.

Mat swore. The canoe was in deep water. The salmon started downstream. "Twitch up the anchor," Mat called hurriedly. "Put your foot on the rope. Drop your tip and give slack. Take the pole and set the canoe in toward the bar. I'll wade out and catch you as you drift down."

Five minutes later, wet to the waist and furiously angry, he scrambled over the gunwale. The salmon was, for the water, a small one; about nine pounds. When it was gaffed and they came again ashore, Mat spoke his wrath.

"Now listen, Mister," he said briefly. "You may be the King, in England; and the Queen too, for all I care. But up here you're just a sport, and I'm responsible for you. No more tricks. You'll do what I say—or we go back to Jack's to-morrow and I'm through."

M'Lord considered the salmon on the grass. "Good fish," he said. "Good fight."

"You hear me?" Mat demanded. "Make up your mind. What's it going to be?"

"My good fellow," said M'Lord. "Don't be absurd. Of course we're going on."

This was not, perhaps, the pledge Mat had demanded; and certainly it was not abject surrender. But Mat did not force the issue. "All right," he assented. "As long as you remember I'm boss, we won't have any trouble."

But M'Lord said only : "Hah!"

They passed the last cabin; and the river that had been a broad, bold stream narrowed more and more, and towering forest ramparts rose high on either bank. They moved through a lane walled with spruce, paved with running water, and cut off sharply at every bend so that it seemed to end just before them and behind. They saw many deer, and once or twice surprised a moose, and once or twice a bear. They saw woodchucks, and once a mink upon the bank; and muskrats, tails flipping the surface like a sculling oar, dived as the canoe came near.

At night, firelight carved a haven for them out of the solid darkness; till when the embers died, blackness like a blanket settled down. They caught trout when they chose; and a salmon now and then, beaching the fish—since they had no need of his sweet flesh—to loose the hook and let him go. Solitude received them; and Mat saw a change in M'Lord. He had seemed at first to wear a sort of drowsy inattention; but in the deep wilderness he became more alert. He watched the unfolding reaches of the river; he sat erectly; he asked questions, and, rarely, he talked.

Mat, standing erect in the stern of the canoe, manipulating his pole with a monotonous and tireless patience all day long, nevertheless began to enter into the other man's mind. M'Lord spoke often of the vastness of this wilderness and how a man might if he chose lose himself forever here; and Mat always demurred.

"Not as easy as you'd think," he said. "It ain't like in town. Man passes your house in town, you might not notice; but up here if a man goes by, you wonder who he is, and where he's going, and when he'll be back."

"He might walk through the woods. Keep out of sight!"

"Wouldn't get far," Mat argued. "Hard going, through the woods."

"Travel by night, then."

The guide grinned. "The guardians keep full as tight a watch at night as they do by day," he insisted. "No, he'd not sneak by."

"Well, suppose a man did come up river, on lawful business, and they knew it—and he never came back. What then?"

"They'd find him."

"Needle in a hay-stack!" M'Lord suggested.

"You'd be surprised. No sir, not as easy as you'd think, to hide up here!"

M'Lord reverted again and again to his thesis that a man wishing so to do could hide himself forever in this great wilderness. Mat as persistently rejected the possibility.

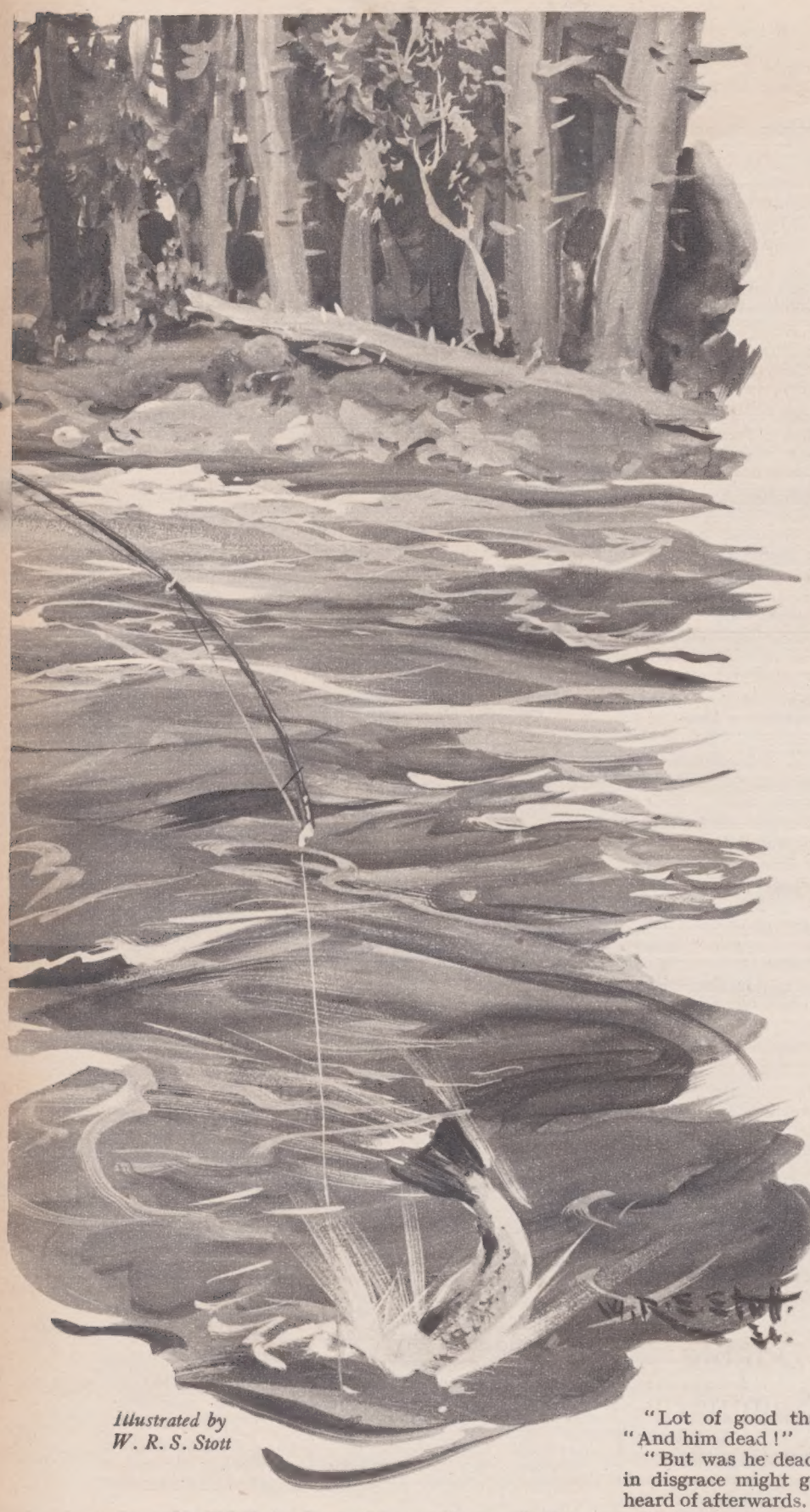
"Not if they were after him," he declared. "Not if there was them that wanted to find him. It might take time; but up here, there's plenty of time. No sir, he wouldn't have a chance, with the Mounted on his trail."

"Well, I didn't mean to say the police were after him, y'know."

"Then why would he want to hide?" Mat challenged.

M'Lord hesitated for a time before replying, and Mat remembered that a similar question had been left unanswered once before. But after an interval, a dozen strokes of the pole, M'Lord moved and spoke.

"Well, y'know," he said then, "I knew a chap



Illustrated by W. R. S. Stott

once who did that. I mean to say, bounced off no one knew where and—never came back. This chap had been up here once. I've been thinking of him, wondering if he could have come up here and hidden away." And he added, in a curious tone: "Name of Courtney. But I asked you about him the first day."

"What was the matter with him?" Mat persisted.

M'Lord seemed to scan the narrowing river ahead, but he did not answer, did not for an hour or two thereafter speak at all.

Yet from that moment Mat was sure that M'Lord had come here to look for the man named Courtney, and two nights later M'Lord spoke of the matter again.

They were crossing the height of land; a short portage to-morrow would bring them to the headwaters of the stream that would in due course carry them on its strong-flowing waters down to journey's end. And after supper by the firelight, without prompting or preamble, M'Lord told the story of the man named Courtney; thus belatedly answering the question Mat had asked two days before.

"This chap Courtney," he said, puffing at his pipe. "When the Big Show started, he might have had a commission like a shot; but not he. He went into the ranks, but being what he was, he didn't stay there long. Once you got the first step, promotion was just a question of doing your job and staying alive. In the spring of 1916 he was a major."

M'Lord hesitated behind a cloud of smoke and then went on: "He pulled his men out of a position in the spring drive. Left a hole in the line, and Jerry found it and came through, and things were bad for a while. Courtney wouldn't say a word in his own defence. Court martial called it cowardice under fire. He'd have been stood up against a wall, but he had friends. So they drummed him out; dishonourable discharge."

M'Lord's voice was carefully level and calm. "After he left hospital—he'd stopped a shell fragment—he dropped out of sight. I was a nipper then, eight years old, but I remember all about it. Five years after, his brother died and he came into—a bit of property. Lawyers tried to find him; hunted all over the world. No go. That was nineteen twenty-one.

"Then, seven years after that, the man who had been his C.O. died. Left a letter confessing he'd ordered Courtney to retreat that day. When he saw the mess he'd made, the old boy got the wind up, let Courtney take the blame. And Courtney took it. Never squeaked."

Mat said something violent under his breath.

"Righto," M'Lord assented. "Seemed so to me! And to everyone else. But the old boy was dead and, according to law, Courtney was dead too. Something about seven years' absence, or some such tosh! As if a man was bound to be dead just because you didn't know where he was!

"Yes, Courtney was dead as a herring, the lawyers said. So there was a posthumous decoration, ceremonies, this and that, medal for his widow and so on."

There was a curious blankness in his tone; and Mat, though he was a bold and fearless man, shivered as though he were afraid.

"Lot of good that did Courtney," he offered. "And him dead!"

"But was he dead?" M'Lord suggested. "Chap in disgrace might go off somewhere and never be heard of afterwards. He might have come up here."

Mat said, almost gently: "If he did, I never heard of him."

M'Lord nodded, with a curious weariness. "No," he assented, and he rose.

"This man named Courtney," Mat suggested. "If he was alive, and you could get word to him that that old business was straightened out, he'd be glad to hear it, probably."

"He was married," said M'Lord in an absent tone. "Had a son. Yes, he'd be glad!"

And he moved off to the tent. But Mat stayed a while longer by the dying fire, staring into the flames.

On the third day after that they met Charlie Frame. Charlie was a lumberman, employed by the company that logged the headwaters. In summer he and his crew repaired booms and drove piles and put in cribwork and patched up dams to prepare the river for the next year's drive. In the fall his crew swamped roads; in the winter they felled the great trees and snaked them to the rollways; in the spring they helped take the drive downstream. Charlie was a man past fifty. With his hat on, he looked to be a robust thirty-five. He had been on the river almost forty years, and he had a cabin far up river—where M'Lord and Mat Houston stopped one day.

And they stayed there that night; and M'Lord and Charlie Frame had talk together. Mat Houston while they talked kept his tongue between his teeth and his eyes upon the fire. This was not his business; there was no call for him to speak. But on the other hand, he missed not a word.

He observed that M'Lord said nothing at all about a man named Courtney, but he pursued his favourite topic; the suggestion that a man desiring to hide forever from the world might come into this wilderness and disappear.

Charlie Frame said—as Mat had said before him—that such a thing was not possible. "Hasn't been a man come above Two-Mile Sluice in thirty years and me not know it," he declared. "I've knowed when he come, and when he went back. If he did."

M'Lord turned his head and his monocle caught the firelight like a mirror and gleamed red. "If he did. But suppose he didn't?" he suggested.

Charlie Frame replied: "Then I'd know how he got killed, and where we buried him." He added, like an amendment: "Or where we found his bones." Mat Houston saw that some memory had stirred in Charlie. "Like the skeleton of Six-Mile Gulch," he said.

M'Lord filled his pipe and puffed it hard; but Mat saw that his eyes suddenly were keen.

"Take that fellow, now," Charlie Frame reflected without prompting, his voice falling, as a man's voice falls when he speaks of tragic, half-forgotten things. "It was late November when he come up river," he said. "He come alone, in a canoe; and Two-Mile Sluice got him. The river was high; and his pole slipped, half way up Two-Mile; and he went slantwise on a rock, and his canoe broke in two. He grabbed his rifle and cartridge belt as he went over the side. His axe stuck in the stern somehow, and it drifted ashore below; and his b'iling kittle floated right side up. That was everything he saved. That and the wet clothes he had on. I had a camp at the forks two miles above the Sluice and he made it up there along the bank, come there that night half froze, half dead."

M'Lord, through smoke clouds, watched him. Mat Houston watched M'Lord.

"Know his name?" M'Lord inquired.

Charlie shook his head. "We fed him and dried his clothes and I offered him a job," he said. "No go. I asked him who he was: and he said: 'I'm just an old Frenchman from Lake St. John'" Charlie's eyes were shrewd. "But you can tell a Frenchman from Lake St. John as far as you can hear him talk. This man talked English as good as me." He spat. "And a sight better," he amended. "Whoever he was, he wasn't an old Frenchman from Lake St. John any more than he was a Chinaman."

"Quite," said M'Lord. "And he didn't take the job?"

"He went on," Charlie replied. "Took his rifle—a good one, that was; engraving on the lock and barrel too, and a place on the butt where a plate with initials had come off—and his axe and his kittle and some flour and bacon and coffee that he was bound he'd pay me for, and went on up river. Said he was going to run a line of traps, stay all winter."

He went on, almost resentfully: "I tried to make him take an outfit, in place of the one he'd lost; but he was stubborn, wouldn't take only what he could pay for. Two-Mile had stripped him clean. If he'd had what he started with, he'd have wintered all right; but as it was—well, Two-Mile got him." He added in a lower tone: "I tried to locate him in the spring, but I couldn't. Never did know what happened to him till I found his bones in Six-Mile Gulch four years afterward."

M'Lord filled his pipe again. After a long time he asked, almost gently:

"Who killed him?"

"He died," said Charlie. "Froze, may be. Or took sick. He died in his bed, what there was of it. I was crusing up the Gulch, and I happened to walk right on to the cabin he'd built. You couldn't have got into it without stooping over. Maybe five feet high inside, no window, a door you had to crawl to get into. Fireplace and chimney of rocks and clay. Poles and sod for a roof. He'd had boughs for a bed, on the floor, and died on it. The roof was falling in. The bones were scattered some. It was the rifle I knowed him by. That and the axe and the kittle. All rusted away; but I'd had a good look at the rifle. I could tell it. It was him."

He added: "He must have died that first winter, by the looks of the bones." And he put fresh chunks on the fire. "I collected what there was and piled some rocks on it," he said. "Seemed kind of pitiful to leave 'em so."

"Quite," M'Lord agreed. His tones were dry.

(*continued on next page*)

Continuing The Noble Lord

He looked at Charlie Frame. "You wouldn't care to show me the place?"

"Can, as well as not," Charlie declared. "It's down below here." He added: "Not that there's anything left to see."

M'Lord said only "Hah!"

So next day Charlie went down river with them; and the day after, Charlie and Mat and M'Lord fought a way up Six-Mile Gulch and found, two hours' hard going from the river, a heap of rotted logs that had been a cabin, and a little monument of rocks neatly piled.

"That's it," said Charlie Frame.

M'Lord for a little while did not move or speak; he stood looking at the pile of rocks. But then he did a curious thing. He removed the stones in the little cairn, and found the rusted rifle, the axe head, a few grey bones. He rearranged the bones with a grave gentleness. Then, without explanation, ignoring the fact that Charlie and Mat Houston watched him wonderingly, he took something from his pocket.

Mat saw it clearly; a small, flat lead box, soldered tight.

He laid this box among the old grey bones; and then, almost tenderly, he replaced the stones of the cairn again. Charlie Frame and Mat looked at each other in a deep curiosity—but they asked no questions. It had begun to rain.

M'Lord said, humbly, appealingly: "I'll stay a few minutes, overtake you. You two go along."

So they started the return trip to the river. Once Mat looked back and saw that M'Lord stood bare-headed by the little cairn. Then the forest hid him.

A little further on, they waited till he came up with them. It was raining hard. Back at their sodden camp, M'Lord asked one more question. "Two-mile Sluice? That's below us?"

"Four miles," Charlie agreed.

"If he hadn't lost his outfit there, he—might not have died."

"Well, he'd have had a better chance, sure," Charlie assented.

M'Lord nodded, and went into the tent. Mat and Charlie squatted under shelter of a lean-to hastily thrown up and thatched with hemlock boughs; and they asked one another all the questions they had not dared ask M'Lord.

Then night came down. The rain held hard. Mat heard the flooded river begin to rise.

At ten o'clock next morning, Mat and M'Lord—Charlie had returned up river—came to the head of Two-mile Sluice. The split rock was under water. That meant the sluice would be boiling, angry, dangerous. Jack Thompson had warned Mat to have M'Lord walk down the bank if there were danger here, but Mat did not suggest this. He was afraid to. He had spoken to M'Lord once this day, and been answered curtly; and Mat suddenly was in a hurry to be home. Without hesitation, he drove into the head of the sluice.

Two miles of water, deep, strong, boiling and eddying and sucking and buffeting, ridden by great curving steeds of foam like breakers on a beach; and here and there the snarling teeth of boulders ripped the flood. Two miles; a scant six minutes. Then they came into the bliss of slower water, and Mat poled ashore to unload and dump their canoe.

On shore, M'Lord spoke. "That's Two-mile Sluice?"

"That's her."

"Pitch the tent," said M'Lord gently. "We're staying here to-night."

Mat made some protest, not effectual. M'Lord was sweetly reasonable, but not to be shaken. Mat pitched the tent, and M'Lord asked, nodding toward the river:

"Could you pole up through that?"

"Some parts," Mat admitted. "Keeping close to the banks. There's three-four places I'd have to carry."

"We'll take the canoe back up," M'Lord announced. "I want to make that trip down through again." He added: "Clever job you did."

Mat hesitated; but flattery persuaded him. Part of the way up Two-mile Sluice he poled; several times he waded, towing the canoe, and thrice for a few rods he carried it on his shoulders. When, after the last carry he put it down and slid it into the water, they were at the head of the sluice. Mat held the canoe, bade M'Lord get in.

But M'Lord said: "I'll take it down alone."

Mat grinned, shook his head. "You'd never make it."

"Done some punting on the Thames," M'Lord said mildly.

Mat said, half angry: "This isn't the Thames! Get in. I'll take her through."

"I'd like to try it," M'Lord urged. "I'll take the responsibility."

"You're crazy!" Mat insisted. "Get in!"

M'Lord murmured gently: "Sorry, old man." His fist caught Mat neatly, and Mat's knees ceased to function and Mat sat down hard.

When his vision cleared, he saw M'Lord poling out toward the quickening current, and Mat staggered to his feet and shouted: "Come back!" But then he saw it was too late for that, and he cupped his hands and bawled: "Sit down! Paddle, not pole!"

M'Lord heard; he sat down. Mat, running along the shore, saw the canoe tip into the first pitch; saw it swing crazily. The current caught it broadside and rolled it over and over, across a gravel bar—to Mat's very feet. Mat grappled it, M'Lord got footing, and between them they hauled it clear.

Mat saw, with reluctant respect, that M'Lord had held fast to the paddle. They carried the canoe ashore and then Mat turned to the other man.

"Now," he said grimly, "I'm going to teach you who's boss of this outfit." And he came in, head down, fists cocked.

M'Lord protested: "Don't do that, Mat. No use, really, y'know." And even as he spoke he deflected Mat's right with a tap on the wrist, stepped inside it, and—Mat sat down hard and spat out a flake of tooth.

"No use, really," M'Lord repeated. "Have a bit of sense, old man."

"I'll knock your head off!" Mat threatened, trying to rise.

"Not leading with your right, Mat," M'Lord said kindly. "It isn't done, y'know. But suppose you did; I'm still going to stay here till I run the sluice alone. Why not show me how?"

"What's the idea?" Mat protested, coming uncertainly to his feet.

"Call it that I'm sorry for that chap Courtney," M'Lord said vaguely. "This bit of river did him in. I want to teach it manners, that's all."

"You'll bust the canoe; leave us stranded here."

"We can walk out."

"You'll get yourself drowned."

"Hah! I've done some punting on the Thames. Need to learn the knack, that's all."

Mat threw up his hands. "All right, be a blasted fool!" he said. "Come on. We'll carry it up to the head again." They lifted the canoe between them. "Swim, can you?" he challenged.

"Oh, rather!"

"Well, don't try to or you'll drown. If you fall out, go with the current. Keep your head upstream if you can; hit the rocks with your feet. And with the canoe, keep her in the main current, except at the big rock half way down. Swing her to the right of that. You'll have to back paddle on the right all the way down the run above to get her over to that side. If you don't, you're sunk sure."

"Thanks," said M'Lord. "I'll remember."

They set the canoe down above the Sluice again; but higher upstream this time than before. Mat put a rock in the bow.

"That will make her ride better," he said. "The place to hit the Sluice is beyond that boil in the middle. There's a split rock ten feet upstream from the boil. Get on the other side of that."

M'Lord smiled approvingly. "Good man," he said. "Thanks."

"You're crazy," Mat told him angrily; but then he grinned. "I'm crazy too, I guess, to let you try it. Wait till I get a start down the bank," he said. "So I'll have a chance to pull you out again. Good luck, you blasted fool!"

M'Lord chuckled. "A pair of us, what?" he suggested. "Both blasted fools!"

"Sure!" Mat confessed. "But I'll bet you get away with it, at that." And he set out at a trot down the shore.

But once he laughed. "Punting on the Thames!" he said aloud, and laughed again.

Mat likes nowadays to tell the tale of the next three days. He told it to Jack Thompson a week later, after they were safe back at the base camp, and after M'Lord had gone. While he stayed, no word had been spoken of the thing they had done together. M'Lord departed; and Jack drove him to the train and returned; and then Mat told Jack the tale from first to last.

At the end, he said by way of summary:

"So that's the whole of it. He tried it four times the first day, got dumped every time, finally cut his head open on a rock that knocked him goofy so he couldn't have another try that day.

"But next morning—the water was worse—he went at it again, and I helped him. Both of us a couple of lunatics trying to get ourselves drowned.

"He cracked a rib, I think, the first time he got spilled that second day; but he wouldn't quit. I don't know about the rib; but I know he sprained his wrist, because it puffed up, and I had to strap it tight so he could handle the paddle. You'd have laughed to see me running along beside the river, cussing him, and cussing the river, and yelling at him what to do. Oh, I was crazy too.

"But by Godfrey, we licked it, Jack! He made it, the first run in the afternoon, that second day.

"I'd have quit then; but not him. He wasn't satisfied. The next try, he got spilled right at the foot. But the third day, he ran the Sluice five times, and never a spill. And then he was satisfied to start for home."

So Mat finished the tale; and he added guiltily: "I know what you told me, Jack; and I tried to argue with him. He knocked me over twice. Maybe I couldn't have stopped him anyway; but his knocking me down wasn't the reason I let him do it. I got so I wanted him to do it. I was as crazy as him before the end."

Jack Thompson nodded thoughtfully. "Tell me again," he suggested, "why he wanted to do it."

"Because it was the Sluice that killed Courtney," Mat explained. "Anyway, M'Lord figured it so. You know what I think? I think he came up here looking for that man. He kept asking me about Courtney, till Charlie Frame showed us that skeleton in Six-Mile Gulch."

And he said: "Another thing, the day we left the Sluice, after we licked it, M'Lord looked back, and he said, sort of to himself: 'Brave bones, rest easy now!'" He grinned, confessed: "It kind of made me cry."

Jack remarked: "M'Lord says he's through with fishing and hunting from now on. Says he's going to stay in England, marry, take his seat in the House of Lords, and all that."

Mat chuckled. "Well," he said, "he may have been a lord when he went up river, but he came back a man!"

Jack nodded. "Did you talk to Charlie Frame about the dead man?" he asked.

"Sure. That night after M'Lord went to bed."

"Did he say anything about Courtney's being crippled?"

Mat looked at him in surprise. "How'd you know?" he demanded.

"What was it?" Jack insisted, in a hushed tone.

"Why, Charlie said it was a wonder Courtney could get along at all," Mat explained. "Said he had a leather loop on his left arm to help him hold the paddle or the pole. You see, the old man had lost one hand."

NEXT WEEK

S. P. B. MAIS

Double Summer Number

on sale Friday June 19th Price 3d.

● INCLUDES opening instalment of Francis Beeding's baffling new thriller "The Legacy Murders." Stories by Christine Jope-Slade, Barré Lyndon, Douglas Newton and "Sinbad," and features by Herbert Sutcliffe, who starts a series of cricket reminiscences, S.P.B.Mais, Susan Lindt, Horace Newte, S. L. Bensusan and W. J. Passingham,

and Four Pages of Laughter

by D. M. B. COLLIER

Britain's "soft drink craze" is reaching vast proportions. It keeps a large industry furiously busy all winter.

In Search of a £5,000,000 THIRST

IF there were a road fifty feet wide stretching from Southampton through London to the north of Inverness-shire, and it were covered from start to finish with lemons, you would need every single fruit to quench Britain's thirst during the summer months.

If all the soda water syphons sold in this country every summer were put one above the other you would have enough to build a Blackpool tower and some left over to start building a Crystal Palace.

A man could have his daily bath in twenty gallons of fruit juice for one hundred and sixty two years and six months (leap years included) before he could consume just one summer's "displacement" of citrus fruit juice.

These are merely three of the facts that were flung at me when I went in search of the £5,000,000 thirst that troubles Britain from now till October; it is a thirst that keeps a large industry furiously busy all winter, trying to catch up on our "soft drink craze." But it is a thirst about which we are very faddy, as you would find if you went behind the scenes in the factories that work to satisfy it.

Centenarians have their flavoured barley water, and the children their pure diluted fruit juice.

Twenty years ago, ginger beer, lemonade, orangeade, lime juice and ordinary soda and mineral waters were the only summer drinks sold extensively. Fancy fruit-flavoured drinks and other specialities were for such rare occasions as picnics and parties. Now these "soft" drinks are being sold in such enormous quantities.

Manufacturers found we had developed a taste for pure fruit juice; we just refused all substitutes. So nearly two million cwts. of oranges were used last year with more than half a million cwts. of grapefruit. And peaches and cherries were imported in gigantic quantities.

The Mineral Water is the oldest "soft drink" in the country.

And there's a romantic story in the life of Jacob Schweppe, a Swiss, who had after manufacturing artificial mineral waters in Geneva, crossed to England in 1794 to set up a small establishment in Bristol.

In those days soda water was such a novelty, that the authorities treated it as patent medicine and imposed an Excise Duty of threepence on every bottle. So the only medium of distribution was the chemist, who received his supply of soda water with the duty stamp fixed over the cork after the fashion of a proprietary medicine.

When the duty was removed, the stamp gave way to a paper strap of similar design, which was used as a seal until recently when the old-fashioned cork was replaced by the new metal cork.

Just as the medical profession helped the sale of modern fruit drinks by its advice to "take more fruit," so it was that the doctors helped to make Jacob Schweppe prosperous.

In a large London factory that was preparing for the "Great Thirst" I watched with amazement the care taken to wash bottles.

They are pasteurised in a machine that fills them with water and caustic soda and then they are passed through a trough in which the caustic soda is removed.

Bottles are then placed on water nozzles fitted round a large, slowly revolving wheel. As each bottle completes the circuit it is considered perfectly clean.

On the ground floor of the factory there is a plant making carbonic acid gas, which imparts the bubble and sparkle to table waters. Here also are several almost human machines labelling bottles.

Another machine distils essences for flavouring direct from the fruit and delivers them, through glass tubes, to the bottling section.

On the second floor are immense filters and tanks for mixing soda, lithia, potash, seltzer and other waters, while the huge stocks of cordials and all kinds of squash would ruin any curious schoolboy's chances of going to heaven.

Artesian wells draw the water by hydraulic pumps from a depth of 500 feet. Looking crystal clear, this natural gift is poured into three tanks lined with white glazed tiles, each holding 7,000 gallons.

Then I went to a factory renowned for its fruit drinks.

The most amazing sight was the thousands of oranges being squeezed—the only process in which the fruit is handled. Oranges are cut in half by a guillotine, after which they run down a shute to be picked up by a girl who presses the half against a revolving "rose," which clears out the entire fruit, pulp, pips, pith and all, which runs down into a container and from there into a strainer, then through a wide pipe into a finer strainer.

All this fruit juice, with the softest cloud of pulp, is bottled by machinery and preserved by the slightest addition of harmless preservative. I looked on fascinated by all this display of oranges while stacks of cases of grapefruit towered above me.

This factory is busy all the year round, because fruit drinks with hot water and hot milk are now becoming popular cold weather drinks.

Fruit that would be considered splendid for eating is not thought fully flavoured enough for drinking. Only Florida grapefruit, the best limes from the West Indies, and the finest oranges (sweet, thin-skinned varieties) Kentish cherries and South African peaches are used.

All firms agree that grapefruit is becoming more popular than the former favourites—ginger beer and lemonade. Ginger wine is, however, the tennis player's drink and takes first place at Wimbledon.

Grapefruit is tremendously in demand in public houses where soft drinks are being sold in ever increasing quantities, and a publican told me that it encourages people to bring teetotal friends, so that fruit juice is bringing much additional trade to hotels.

All kinds of fruit champagnes are now made and every season some new flavour is added to the list.

To the uninitiated, even after a close study of price lists and catalogues, it is difficult to remember the difference between "juices," squashes, cordials, wines and fruit syrups, but what an expression of horror spreads over the face of the "Man in the Trade" if one confuses them in any way.

When I asked about "old-fashioned" stone ginger beer, I was told that ginger wine in bottles has replaced this old favourite, because the earthenware jar absorbed some of the strength of the ginger.

Judging by the long list of drinks made with it, from Dry Ginger Ale (non-alcoholic of course), ginger brandy and ginger brandy cordial, green ginger wine, gingerette and stone ginger soda fountain syrup, ginger must still be very popular.

And that brings us to that most important innovation—the soda fountain, which was introduced into this country from the United States just before the War.

"Some mineral water manufacturers say a soda fountain drink is not really soda water," I said to an expert.

"A soda fountain," he replied, "is very simply constructed with a cylinder of gas, a water supply and a draught arm with a coarse spray and a fine spray causing greater aeration.

"Obviously soda water produced this way is bound to be more flat, than when the gas is driven into siphons under high pressure. The finest soda water of all is that tightly compressed and strongly corked in a small bottle."

One of the big men in this business told me what difficulty they had finding pure fruit syrups for milk drinks.

"Every housewife," he said, "knows how quickly lemon or orange juice will curdle milk, even if it is only added in the smallest quantity. Scientists and fruit drink specialists at last found a process whereby fruit juice could be added to either hot or cold milk."

The milk bar is of course the latest soft drink innovation. The first was opened at the Bath and West Show by the National Milk Publicity Council last year, and was an immediate success.

Since then a dozen milk bars have been opened in London, and the number is to be trebled during the summer. Departmental stores and cafés have also installed special milk menus, and one of the largest firms of teashops and caterers in the country has a special separate menu printed for milk drinks and specialities. Even the most exclusive hotels are specialising in the new milk shakes.

"All milk drinks must, like other drinks, be served icy cold or piping hot, a tepid drink of any kind is an abomination but when it is a milk one it becomes even more unappetising, which means that more and more refrigerators are being installed," I was told by a milk bar manageress who with the assistance of charmingly dressed waitresses has to deal with actual queues for milk drinks, nearly all day and part of the night.

Nothing so far has been said about the great thirst at home. Well, that is catered for just as effectually, for not only are all the squashes and juices available in small quantities for home use but also syrups are put in tiny bottles so that women can experiment with their own combination of flavours.

RHAPSODY *in* RED—3

Rare contemporary photographs of the men who fought in the South African war. Left, three members of a Boer family ; above, the rallying of a Boer Commando.

WHEN I joined the Navy I was only fourteen, but at least I was a seaman with three voyages behind me and I knew darned well how to take care of myself with my fists and my wits as well. A training ship was a rough school in those days, but there was nothing of the "new kid" about me, who had gone to sea in a wind-jammer, fended for myself in New York, seen action under a foreign flag, killed my first man and watched cattle wild with fright break loose on a hurricane-swept deck.

George Blake, the Mate, who hauled me aboard his boat at Rio and invited the Brazilian officers to fetch their deserter if they wanted him, was killed in that hurricane on our homeward voyage. I have never again been through such a storm. The cattle deck became a shambles when several of the maddened steers broke bellowing from wave-smashed stalls. Blake went in among them in that confined space, trying to secure beasts that had not already fallen and broken their legs. I saw him jump on to a bollard just as a terrific sea came over.

For one instant he stood outlined against the purple of sea and sky; the next he was gone, swept like a china figure off a polished table with one flick of a gigantic duster.

My heart seemed to stop beating with dismay and grief. "He's gone," I thought, "and now I shan't ever be able to buy him those pipes!" I had never told the mate how grateful I was to him for saving my life, for how can a ship's boy find words to thank an officer? But I meant to give him a case of pipes directly we reached England. This triviality of the pipes was a very part of my childlike grief at his loss.

While it lasts, a storm like that stuns thought itself. Our cattle hands were not sailors. I was a better seaman myself than most of the men that were picked up "on the beach" in the South American shipping trade of those days. There were big fellows lying in the scuppers in an agony of sea-sickness; others on their feet but mutinous with panic.

Our officers, Englishmen and grand fellows, drove them to work, a belaying pin in one hand, a revolver handy in the belt. I saw a huge South American draw a knife and strike the second mate from behind. A brace buckle deflected the blade and the officer spun round and dropped his assailant dead with a single blow of the belaying pin. They slid the corpse over the side just as it was. There were no other casualties except among the beasts, but at least a score of them "went into the ditch" after the dead mutineer.

On the voyage home, I remember, the man in the berth above me boasted of three murders and swore that he was going to England to "do in" another man against whom he had a grudge. I saw this fellow one night, when he thought I was asleep, going through my meagre belongings to see if I had any money hidden away. I lay still, laughing in silence and feeling the small bulge of notes sewn into my shirt.

I had a grand time on that cattle-boat, taking my trick at the wheel with the other men (I was safe to leave with a given course to steer by) and clearing up the officers' mess when I was off duty. The food I found in that way seemed so good and I ate so much of it that I regained most of my lost weight and landed at Liverpool in the pink of condition.

Out of my Brazilian "loot," I bought myself some new "slops," took the first train to London, and turned up at our house in Wood Green, a real, bronzed sailorman. Mother laughed and cried over me and could scarcely stop hugging me in her arms. Then the Old Man walked in.

"Hullo, Dad!" I said to him.

He looked me up and down and grunted. Then he extended a packet of cigarettes.

"Glad you're home, Jack," said he. "We've missed you. . . . Er . . . what about a drink?"

Within a week I had joined the old training ship, *Arethusa*. My experience of the sea might have sickened some lads, but nothing but the Navy would do for me and I have never regretted the decision.

It was a fight that got me into the *Arethusa's* band. I am not at all of a quarrelsome nature, but I have always loved a fight when it has come my way without the seeking. There was a lad of about my own age practising the cornet one day and he was no better at it than my friend, Kerryman, the sailor who first taught me how to "blow and spit."

This fellow was a bandsman already and I wondered how he had "made the grade." I listened to him and was simply bursting to do a little showing off. At last I asked him to let me "have a blow," and he did—but not the kind I meant.

In fact, he was amazed by my "cheek." He explained this profanely, and as I was familiar with the language of the forecastle, even his swearing seemed amateurish. "You go to the devil!" he concluded, and I advised him mildly to "keep his hair on." Thereupon, to my utter surprise, he hit me—*Me*, who had taken lickings from grown men, but never without fighting back!

Not to put too fine a point upon it, I knocked the stuffing out of that lad. And first he shouted and then he yelled for help and out from his cabin came rushing Mr. Armstrong, the bandmaster, furious at the din.

My opponent was taller and heavier, but he wasn't looking at his best.

"You don't seem to be much good at fighting," observed Mr. Armstrong, unsympathetically, to his boy cornet.

"But he can fight a dam' sight better than he can play the cornet, sir!" I rejoined.

The bandmaster was amused. He said that if I thought I knew so much about it, perhaps I had better show him what I could do myself. Naturally, I played him the two tunes I had first learned—"The Heart Bowed Down," and "Tom Bowling." Mr. Armstrong endured both and decided to make a bandsman of me. Within a few months I was the band sergeant and solo cornet on *Arethusa*. Not only my naval career, but also the whole course of my life was decided for me. Soon afterwards a draft was ready for the Navy and I put my name down; but I was a bandsman all through my eleven years' service.

There were four of us boys who went from the *Arethusa* to the *Impregnable* at Plymouth. We were taken to the Chief Bandmaster's cabin and there I met for the first time a man whose friendship and steady, sensible advice has been invaluable to me for thirty-six years, Major Harry Lidiard, now retired.

Lidiard was bandmaster and only a Chief Petty Officer then, but he was a man of such quality and personality that he was always given the "Mister" to which none below the rank of warrant officer is strictly entitled. To all of us boys he was simply "the Guv'nor." I never heard any man say a word against him. His great heart and his sense of humour will keep him young if he lives to be a hundred. And he turned out some very fine musicians—some of whom have since climbed to the top of the tree. Lidiard himself was the first naval musician to rise from the ranks to a commission. He retired as a Major in the Marines.

Mr. Lidiard passed me and my three companions into the Service subject only to medical examination. That didn't worry any of us, for we were all fighting fit. I wasn't quite fifteen then, but I was dead keen and when I was off-duty I could usually be found practising the cornet behind the bag-racks on the orlop deck. *Impregnable*, of course, was a four-decker. James Harding, the band sergeant and my immediate chief, was very good to me and taught me a great deal.

Many a basin of "plue" (tea) and slice of bread and butter came my way through his kindness and, believe me, they were welcome to a growing lad, who found the interval between dinner at 11.30 a.m. and tea at 6 p.m. a "perishing hungry stretch," particularly in winter time. Of course, one *could* go to the canteen, but sixpence a week total pocket money was not enough to encourage the habit.

Discipline was a terrible word in the Navy forty and even thirty years ago. Now the men even get menus with their tea! *Menus!* And the rations include jam and butter, fruit and fresh meat for supper and breakfast! The grub in my time was just the same as it used to be in Nelson's days. Why, I have actually seen barrels of "salt horse" (preserved beef) with labels on them—"*Last examined in* 1888"—ten years before they were opened for consumption!

But I'm not one of those tough old nuts opposed to all change, just because it is change. At the end of last century the food in the Navy was disgracefully bad and the discipline was inhumanly severe. I don't believe the service is any less efficient because the food is now so much better and the discipline rather less brutal and "machine made."

Nevertheless, one *can* get used to almost anything. Life in the training ship was much easier than aboard a man of war, but it was uneventful and toward the end, I found it monotonous. I was glad to reach my eighteenth birthday and to be rated a "man"—with a man's privilege to smoke and stay on shore on night leave, though the rum ration didn't come until three years later. Within two months of reaching this estate, I was posted to that historic ship, *Terrible*, and then I soon learned what full discipline really meant.

Beating about the BUSH *after* BOERS

by J. H. Squire

● The Leader of the Squire Celeste Octet of Radio fame has been a "Jack of All Trades." Here he continues the story of his adventurous life . . . .

"Jack" Squire writes his story.

I can say without exaggeration that it was not possible for any man to do a year's service without being "crimed" and punished several times. Men like myself, of independent spirit and an almost uncontrollable inclination not to be insubordinate, but just to do things in an original way, were constantly in trouble.

Terrible's commander at that time was Arthur Limpus (now Admiral retired) and he was a great fellow, though as strict as tradition itself. A long "defaulter's sheet" was brought to him every Monday morning, and, to save time, the Master-at-Arms, dear old George Crowe, used to read it out to him in his cabin while the Commander was shaving.

Nearly all the offences were quite trivial in themselves and the conversation would go something like this :—

Master at Arms : "George Robinson, sir—late with hammock—first offence."

Commander : "Oh, caution !"

Master at Arms : "John Smith, found leaning against the paintwork. Two previous offences, sir—first, 'Caution'; second, three days 'Ten A.'"

Commander : "Give him five days 'Ten A.'"

Master at Arms : "Tom Barclay—coat button undone . . ."

Commander (interrupting, for Barclay is one of the 'regulars') : "'Nuff said. Ten days 'Ten A.'"

So it would go on all down the list and much valuable time was doubtless saved, for the average "matlo" was far too wise to make excuses for petty "crimes" and when asked what he had to say in his defence would almost invariably return the stolid reply, "Nothing, sir."

An excuse was stupid when the facts were beyond dispute. If you were "crimed" for a button undone, your button must have been undone. If you failed to salute the quarter deck in passing; if your boot-heels were unpolished; if your hair wasn't cut short enough; and if you *did* lean up against the paintwork then, evidently, you had been caught in the act or you would not have been "crimed." For a long, long time I never finished one lot of punishment before I had incurred another. My offences were nothing at all in themselves, but they were "*crimes*" in the Navy.

On one occasion I had fallen in as usual with the other defaulters and, as the Commander approached me, I could see the defaulters' sheet hanging down from his hand and could clearly read the entry against my own name—"Ten days 'Ten A.'"

Now this, it must be noted, was *before* my case had been heard. The Commander was still scraping his chin in his cabin when he decided upon my punishment.

We were all standing rigidly to attention as Commander Limpus strolled along with the Master-at-Arms at his elbow.

"Bandsman Squire," said the latter in his parade sing-song, "came up on deck with a button of his coat undone."

"Anything to say, Squire !" drawled the Commander, strictly according to formula.

Everybody on that deck, officers and men alike, jerked to a startled *qui vive* as I returned an answer entirely outside all naval precedent. "Well, sir," said I meekly. "It's not much good *me* saying anything at all !"

Poor George Crowe, the Master-at-Arms, nearly collapsed. In all his twenty years' experience he had never heard a defaulter ever vary the rejoinder, "Nothing, sir !"

Even the Commander was faintly disconcerted. He looked at me with an odd expression of indignation and surprise.

"Why not, pray ?" he gasped.

"Well, sir," I retorted, a little bit scared now by my own audacity, "I can see that you've already got me down on the sheet for ten days 'Ten A.'"

Commander Limpus raised the sheet to eye-level and stared at it in the most leisurely way.

"So I have," he said gently and with an air of mild surprise, "but of course it's a mistake : it should read 'fourteen days !'"

"*Thank* you, sir," said I and immediately the Master-at-Arms carolled : "Left turn, quick march." Try as I would I could not restrain a chuckle and the Commander saw me and turned his own head away.

Two days later, being then on punishment duty and cleaning the brass outside Commander Limpus' own cabin, he came out suddenly on deck and spoke to me as I sprang to attention.

"You enjoy a joke, don't you ?" he rasped.

"Of course I do, sir; even when it's against myself."

"Good man !" he laughed. "Perhaps you'd also enjoy a bottle of beer. Go tell my steward to give you one and report to the Master-at-Arms that I've cancelled your 'Ten A.'"

I loved him for that. The weather was scorching hot and the beer was sheer nectar. But it made precious little difference. Within the week I was back among the defaulters and the Commander passed sentence once more with a stony eye.

Let me place on record for the benefit of young fellows who may "grouse" about naval discipline to-day the simple fact that I, *an intelligent fellow and a darned good sailor not looking for trouble by any means, once did two hundred and sixty-eight days of consecutive punishment !*

That was on the China Station and among all my offences there was no serious crime. It was "Ten A" all the time—what we called "counting the rivets"—and in tropic waters it was no light punishment.

"Ten A" meant that whenever a man would have been normally off duty he fell in for punishment instead. He was given, naturally, every tiresome and "dirty" fatigue that happened to be available, but there were usually so many defaulters that the fatigues simply wouldn't go round. It followed that those with no fatigues to do were simply lined up facing the ship's side, called to attention and then told to stand at ease. There is nothing in the least easy about a naval "standing at ease." You remain with head slightly bent, hands clasped and gaze fixed in one direction. This attitude, which enables one lot of rivets to be counted again and again but does not permit any wandering gaze, must be maintained without the slightest relaxation.

Dinner had to be eaten during punishment "off the floor" (the deck). The stand at ease never changed except that, after an hour and three quarters, the defaulter was allowed to shift his weight from one foot to the other. This, in fact, was punishment with no make-believe.

I did "Ten A" for almost exactly nine months without a break. It was easier for me than for some of the other defaulters because I was released from punishment, not only for all band work, but also for football practice and games and for boxing, because I was something of a star at both these sports.

Moreover, I am of a philosophic turn of mind. I could stand there, fixed like a dummy and staring at the side, and still see the humour of life, and weave stories for myself and, better still, use all my creative mind to catch and fasten in my memory some fugitive melody that came into my head. More than one of the popular numbers I have since composed were conceived, though not of course completed, while I was "counting the rivets" and doing my interminable 'Ten A.'"

In spite of discipline and punishment, however, I was always fit and usually happy in the Navy. There are no friends in civilian life quite like the pals one makes in the Service and I doubt whether there has ever been quite the "salt" in life itself since I said good-bye to the sea.

Jack Ventham, who joined *Terrible* with me in March, 1898, was my particular friend all through the Navy days and since. The *Terrible* was our first real ship and we "paid her off," together still, in September, 1902. When I first met him I should say that Ventham was the finest cornet player in the whole of the British Navy and one of the very few who could pass that difficult test piece for all cornets : "Home Sweet Home" with flying colours. He became bandmaster in due course, but that made no difference to our friendship.

In my time bandsmen in a man o' war could add to their meagre pay of one and fourpence a day by acting as servants to junior officers and "snotties"

(*continued on page* 13)

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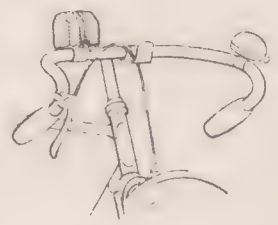

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(midshipmen). The standard pay for this was ten shillings a month and the work was not heavy—no more than preparing your officer's bath, making up and stowing away his hammock, laying out his "rig of the day," and generally valeting his kit. I had three officers to look after when we first commissioned and so nearly doubled my official pay, not to speak of the bottles of beer that went down my throat and on to their wine bills.

For some months *Terrible* was engaged in trooping, mostly to Gibraltar and Malta. I had lots of fun in both places. One trip I remember particularly for the finest roast chicken I ever tasted. It was a stolen chicken and it should have been served at dinner to the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. (now Sir) Austen Chamberlain.

He was going out to Malta with Lord Goschen, then the First Lord, and his staff. The Admiralty chef was also on board and one night Arthur Kearsley the flautist, and I, passed by the Admiral's galley and smelt that chicken roasting. Try living on "salt horse" for a few months and you will know that "not all the perfumes of Arabia" can compare with the divine aroma of the roast.

Terrible was one of the first ships to have refrigerators fitted, but that did us little good for they were for the use of the officers' mess alone. The galley door was open that evening and the chef stood at his oven like a priest before the altar. I hid behind the door while Kearsley ran to the upper deck and, through the galley skylight, discharged upon the bald head of the great man a bag of ashes, potato peelings and other refuse.

Swearing most mightily and girding up his loins for battle, the chef darted out on to the deck flourishing a steel. Choking with laughter, I slipped from the sheltering door, nipped into the galley, and seized the chicken, then done to a turn.

It was during this period of trooping, too, that I had my first big gamble. I am a born gambler and there was a time when I would bet on anything and up to the final limit of my "last bean." Jack Ventham and I wandered into the old *Dreadnought* cafe at Malta on our first evening ashore, called for drinks, and joined the crowd of sailors who were dancing with their black-eyed Maltese girls.

Presently we tired of dancing, there being no pretty girls without partners, and went over to a big table where a "school" of Banker was in full swing. We "punted" for a little while with fair success and then Jack won the bank. I offered to share it with him and we held it for nearly two hours, winning close upon a hundred pounds between us. That night we shared the profits on board, but on the homeward voyage two nights later, I lost the lot in a very "hot" game played on top of the boilers, where a gambling "school" could feel safe from the watchful zeal of the ship's police.

After several other voyages with troops, Captain Robinson left *Terrible* and Captain Percy Scott was appointed in his place. Scott had a great reputation even then as a gunnery expert. He had increased it in *Scylla*, his previous command and, while he was commanding us, he wrote his name indelibly in the annals of naval gunnery. This was, of course, the Percy Scott who died some years ago, a full Admiral of the Fleet.

We men took little interest in the news, but nobody could help knowing that there was trouble brewing in South Africa at this time. We were inclined to laugh at the idea of "old Oom Paul" ever having the nerve to challenge the might of Britain, but we were not the only ones to underestimate President Kruger and his Boers. We were detailed for the China Station in August, 1899, to relieve our sister ship, *Powerful*, and we took our "foreign service leave"—a week for all hands, but a fortnight for the band.

When we rejoined the ship we were still not bothering about South Africa, but on September 24, 1899, *Terrible* sailed under *sealed orders* with 800 officers and men board her. "Sealed orders" mean that the Captain is instructed to proceed to a certain latitude and longitude before opening the envelope containing final instructions.

Captain Scott's orders were simple. There was to be no China Station for us that trip. Instead we were to proceed at once to Simon's Town, the naval base of the West Coast Fleet, and there report to Admiral Harris, Commander-in-Chief at the Cape of Good Hope.

There hangs on the wall of my flat at St. Leonard's on-Sea to-day a medal in a glass case which testifies to my small share in the "Natal Campaign." There are no signal victories inscribed upon this medal for the very good reason that none was gained. Yet, in our way, we men of the Naval Division may claim to have "done our bit" towards the winning of the Boer War.

MAJOR LIDIARD "to us boys he was simply the guv'nor."

I shall record no details of the Natal campaign or of my own service with the Royal Naval Division and its guns, which barked across the dreary veldt at an enemy whom we never saw.

We had scarcely reached the South African Station before we heard of the Chievely disaster, when an entire armoured train was captured by the Boers with all on board it, including Winston Churchill, then the brilliant young war correspondent to *The Morning Post*. Hard upon this reverse came the news of the calamity of Dundee, followed by the disaster of Glencoe. Those were, indeed, the black days of the Boer War, when staid, respectable citizens at home were afraid to pick up their morning's paper lest they should see in screaming headlines the news of another British reverse.

Buller—General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C.—was appointed to the supreme command soon after this. He arrived only to find that Red Tape tied him hand and foot. Roberts superseded him as Commander-in-Chief, but Buller commanded the entire Natal forces throughout the period of my own services.

We adored him for a great-hearted officer who would stroll along the front line smoking his cigar as tranquilly as though he were heading a procession in the streets of London. But I am going a little ahead of events. Our Captain saw very early on that the Boers could out-shoot us and it was he who suggested to Admiral Harris the possibility of putting some naval four-point-seven guns ashore on mobile carriages.

Harris, a real "old-woman" type of sailor, was furious at this "impudent" suggestion, but, within a week, he was forced to eat humble pie. In the interval, Sir George White, besieged in Ladysmith, had sent down to the coast begging for heavy artillery to cope with the Boers' "Long Toms" and, following that appeal, Scott was allowed to organise his first naval artillery on land with his now world-famous four-point-seven guns.

As a bandsman I served with the Naval Division's guns in Natal, but we did not score a single victory, with the possible exception of the Tugela Heights battle in which our artillery played a dominant part. For months we lay at anchor off Simon's Town carrying out deadly-dull routine work under a tropical sun. Then at last we got a signal from the Flagship bidding us proceed to Durban, there to land a brigade to assist Sir Redvers Buller in charge of the Natal forces.

Khaki was served out to our landing party and one bright morning we were all slung over the side in baskets and towed to shore, some three miles from where our ship lay. Durban was a devilish awkward port in those days, owing to the furious ground swell. It didn't trouble me personally, but the roll, after we lay at anchor, was so great that half the crew, even including men who thought themselves good sailors, was violently sick.

The whole of our Naval Brigade entrained for the Tugela, where Buller had his headquarters. My own particular crowd was under the command of that Commander Limpus, who let me off a "Ten A" sentence in circumstances already described.

For me and for most of my pals there was not a single exciting incident in this campaign ashore. Our guns completely outranged the Boer armament and we never caught sight of the enemy at all. At the close of each day would come the order: "Cease fire, No. 4 gun" (or whatever gun it was) and, after that, each crew simply cleaned its gun and settled down to play "Nap" or "Banker" while the battle carried on out of sight and almost out of sound! At sunset we all packed up and finally adjourned to the "wet canteen" to yarn with each other and the more enterprising of the assorted war correspondents who "fought" that campaign with us.

At Christmas-time, I remember, General Buller gave every man a packet of cigarettes and every officer a cigar. He may, or may not, have been a good general, but he was a grand officer to work under. Personal danger simply meant nothing to him. He would ride down the front line accompanied by a trumpeter and a single "aide," just as though he were on a barrack square, smoking an enormous cigar and talking to all "the boys" as though they were real pals. There wasn't the slightest "swank" about this and upon one occasion he had three horses shot under him in a single day!

Christmas passed and Spring drew near. Suddenly a lot of bandsmen including myself were sent back to the ship. Bandsmen in the Navy serve as stretcher-bearers when they are on shore and there had been no stretcher work for any of us.

We had not long rejoined *Terrible* before the great news reached us of the relief of Ladysmith. The most enthusiastic celebrations started in Durban, but they were nothing, I am told, in comparison with the rejoicing at home.

Be that as it may, Captain Scott had a great dinner party on board that night at which Lady Randolph Churchill and Winston were among the celebrities present. Winston had been taken prisoner by the Boers from the armoured train at Chievely and, in the meantime had made his escape at the risk of his life. During the dance which followed the dinner, this smooth-faced warrior and journalist, with his round, chubby face and infinitely assured manner, lit one of his favourite cigars, drew two or three puffs upon it, and immediately laid it down on an ash tray in order to dance with an extraordinarily pretty girl whose name I never learned.

I was playing in the band and the aroma of that cigar reached me where I sat. The canteen had run out of cigarettes at the time and I was just aching for a smoke. I slipped from my place and captured that magnificent Corona.

When Winston had relinquished his partner he hurried back to the more definite charm of his smoke. I shall not easily forget his expression of mingled astonishment and chagrin. His search failed—not unnaturally—and he felt in his breast pocket for his own cigar case. It was empty! I hope that I misunderstood the fervent ejaculations that followed this disappointing discovery.

Let's face it: from my point of view the Boer War was an exceedingly uneventful and dreary campaign. I could tell fifty stories of it that came to me by hearsay, but within my actual personal experience, there is no single incident which comes back to me with any particular thrill or pleasure—apart, that is, from the one occasion when I took a Banker bank under the very wheels of our guns and found three consecutive aces for my share when all the battery was putting the money down "thick and heavy!"

Soon after the raising of the siege of Ladysmith, when our sister ship, *Powerful*, was already homeward bound, we steamed from Africa for the China Seas, to which we had been destined before war broke out.

And that voyage led me to many strange adventures, not only as part of the Boxer campaign in which I served, but also personal and, sometimes, highly unofficial. They included the killing of another man and the winning and losing of a small fortune, when the air hung above us, hot and heavy as a blanket and the gamblers' sanctuary over the boilers was steamy as a Turkish Bath.

A MOLLY O'ROURKE STORY

SOS *Farmery*

IT had been a tiring day at the hospital, and Molly O'Rourke sighed in contented anticipation as she glanced round her snug little flat. That armchair would be wonderful to-night with a book.

Lovely, not to have any appointments for once. Molly was in great demand for parties and dances, and it was seldom she had an opportunity for relaxing in the peaceful solitude of her flat. Bringing a box of chocolates from a drawer, she reclined luxuriously in the comfortable chair.

Almost immediately her door-bell rang. With an exclamation of annoyance, she rose, passed through the little lobby, and opened the door. A young man, a complete stranger to her, stood outside.

"Are you Miss Molly O'Rourke?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied.

"Can I have a word with you?"

"Certainly." Molly was not in the habit of inviting strange young men into her flat, and did not do so now. "What is it?"

The young man glanced along the corridor and saw that it was deserted. He stepped forward, pushing Molly gently but firmly out of the way, and closed the door behind him.

"Are you the Almoner at the Royal Edward Hospital?" he asked immediately.

"I am."

"You look very young for that." His gaze wandered over her dubiously, noting the flaming red hair, the innocent blue eyes, and the lovely face. "I thought you'd have been—well, older. A friend of mine was in your hospital a while ago, and told me about you. He said you were—the goods."

Molly dimpled. In spite of his unceremonious entry, this visitor seemed rather frightened of her.

"So you've come to see whether he was speaking the truth?" she suggested.

"Not exactly." A trace of a smile flitted across his face for a moment. "I came because——" The smile vanished and his voice suddenly became deeper. "I was told you were straight."

"Well?" Molly was growing rather curious.

"Tell me something, please. There was an S O S broadcast to-night for the son of John Farmery, a patient in your hospital. Was it on the level?"

"What do you mean?"

"Is John Farmery so very ill? Does he want to see his son?"

"He's dying," said Molly, gravely. "I saw him this afternoon. He was lying very, very still, plucking at his bedclothes, repeating over and over again: 'I want Cecil. I want my boy. Tell Cecil I want him.'" Her blue eyes narrowed a little as she looked at her visitor. "Are you Cecil?"

"Yes."

"Then why don't you go to the hospital at once instead of coming here? You may be too late."

"I know. I came as soon as I heard the broadcast."

"I can't imagine why you should."

"I'd an idea that S O S might be faked."

"I still don't understand."

"You wouldn't." Again the momentary smile flitted across Cecil Farmery's features. "The police have played tricks like that before."

"Do you mean that they—want you?"

"Yes. Even if they didn't inspire that S O S, they'll be watching the hospital. They'll collar me if I go there."

"What have you done?"

"That's ancient history. I should have been out of the country in a couple of days if this hadn't happened." Farmery's eyes glowed fiercely. "But if The old boy really is dying and wants me, I'm going to him, police or no police! Thanks for seeing me, Miss O'Rourke."

He made towards the door. Molly stood irresolute. Suddenly, she called him back.

"Tell me what you did," she said.

He looked at her, his mouth twitching a little. "Why should I?"

"I might be able to help."

"I'll tell you. I'm not making any excuses. I've been a rotter to the old boy—and everyone else. I was in a bank. I took some money and ran away. The thing was hushed up. The bank authorities didn't even tell my father the whole truth. He thought I'd vanished because of some youthful peccadillo and tried to find me, advertised for me. I changed my name and had a good time on the money I'd stolen. That was five years ago."

"And you mean your father doesn't know?"

"I think not. He believes I'm just wild. But—not that."

"And you're rather proud of it?"

"I was—until quite recently. I've been trying to pull myself together."

"A girl?"

"An angel! She's made me realise. We were going out to Australia together, sailing the day after to-morrow, to make a fresh start."

"And in spite of that you'll take the risk of seeing your father?"

"I'm going to see him, whatever happens."

"Does the—angel know?"

"Yes. She understands."

"Good for her! Well, listen, Mr. Farmery. It nearly broke my heart this afternoon to hear your father calling for you. It was at my request that the S O S was broadcast. The police have nothing at all to do with it."

"But they'll be there, watching the hospital."

"What makes you think so?"

"They've been wanting me a long time. They know my real name. As soon as they heard this broadcast, they'd see an opportunity in it. There'll be a couple of plain-clothes men watching for me at the entrance."

"They can't watch all the entrances!" cried Molly, suddenly. "I'll take you in by a way they've never thought of."

"But they'll have told someone inside—the porter, perhaps—why they're waiting about."

"Never mind. I'll take you straight to the ward, straight to your father, and not a soul in the hospital, except perhaps a nurse, need know who you are."

She caught up her hat and coat, paused to powder her nose, and hurried him from the flat. She knew that she was doing wrong, that her duty was to hand him over to the police. If Pom-Pom ever heard about this, she'd be in terrible disgrace. But she did not hesitate. There was something about Cecil Farmery—and his angel—that she liked. She believed that he really intended to turn over a new leaf, and she was out to help him. She asked the porter at the main entrance to the block of flats to whistle for a taxi, and told the driver to hurry to the Royal Edward Hospital.

The taxi dropped them on the pavement of the quiet street Molly had indicated. After a quick glance round, she led the way towards a small open door in a blank wall, through which a glimpse of an inferno beyond could be obtained.

"The boiler house," she whispered. "Come along. The engineer's a pal of mine."

They passed into the boiler house, paused to exchange a few smiling remarks with the overalled man in charge, traversed a short grimy passage, climbed some iron stairs, and entered the laundry. Threading their way through the silent machinery,

—She turned a valve and clapped the mask over his face. He struggled.

they opened a door, hurried through a busy kitchen, and came to a corridor leading to the wards. In a few moments, Cecil Farmery was standing by his father's bedside.

"Dad!" he murmured. "Don't you know me?" The ceaseless muttering stopped. The gnarled old fingers plucking at the bedclothes were stilled. Dim eyes opened, and a smile spread over the pain-racked features.

"Cecil! My boy!"

Farmery dropped on his knees, arms outflung over the bed. Molly touched him on the shoulder.

"I'll wait outside," she said, her eyes glistening.

She felt sure now that she had done the right thing. The old man would die happy. That was worth a lot.

She turned to the nurse who was watching sympathetically.

"Well, I'll wait—in my office. When the end comes, you might tell Mr. Farmery to come straight there."

"Very well."

Molly walked slowly through the quiet corridors to her office, where she sat down, taking off her hat. More work had collected for her since she left, and she looked over the various reports without much interest.

It was not long before a knock came on the door, startling her. Surely the old man was not dead already.

"Come in," she called.

The door opened and a little gasp of dismay escaped her when she saw the pleasant smiling features of Detective-Inspector Pomeroy.

"Hello, Pom-Pom!" she managed to say. "What are you doing here?"

"I wanted to take you out to dinner, Molly. I called at your flat and the hall porter told me you'd just come back to the hospital. Doing a spot of overtime?"

"Yes."

"I'll wait." Pomeroy settled himself in a chair. "Don't worry about me."

Molly gritted her small white teeth. Though the inspector was her dearest friend, she would rather have seen anyone at this moment than him. Cecil Farmery might be coming along at any time now. And if the two men met. . . . Somehow, she must manage to get rid of Pom-Pom.

And somehow she must warn Farmery not to

by FRANK KING

Illustrated by Greenup

come here as directed. She rose to her feet.

"Back in a minute, Pom-Pom," she said as lightly as she could.

"Righto!" he repeated. "Don't bother about me. Oh, just a minute! I saw some of our boys on duty outside as I came in. It seems they're waiting in the hope of catching a crook. There was an S O S broadcast for him this evening. His father's dangerously ill here, and evidently someone at the Yard thought it might be an opportunity for nobbling him."

"Rather a dirty trick, isn't it?" murmured Molly.

"He's rather a dirty criminal, my dear."

"If he'll take the risk of coming here to see his father in such circumstances, he can't be altogether bad."

"You're always ready to find good somewhere in everyone, aren't you?"

"It's always there. That's why."

"Bless you! Do you know anything about the old boy who's dying? Farmery's the name."

"Yes. I know him. Poor old soul! He thinks the world of his boy."

"Well, if you hear anything about this, you might give me the tip, will you? It would be a feather in my cap if I could get John Saunders."

"Who is he?"

"The crook I'm talking about. His real name's Cecil Farmery."

"I see. What's his particular line of crime?"

"He's a confidence trickster. Most plausible manner. Can make anyone believe everything he wants."

"Oh!" For the first time a little doubt clouded Molly's mind. "He's clever that way, is he?"

She made a hesitant move towards the door. At this moment a timid knock sounded on it. He was here. She ran to open the door, to hide him from Pom-Pom.

Farmery stood in the corridor outside, his face grave yet strangely calm.

"My father's gone, Miss O'Rourke," he said, before she could speak. "He died happy—thanks to you."

In a second, Detective-Inspector Pomeroy was on his feet. Pushing Molly aside, he pulled the door wide open.

"Saunders!" he exclaimed. "Got you at last!" He caught Farmery by the arm and pulled him into the office, closing the door behind him. "You've a nerve to come here!"

The young fellow did not reply. He looked at Molly and there was a world of reproach in his eyes.

"I was told you were—straight," he said quietly.

"I didn't know," faltered Molly. "Inspector Pomeroy's a friend of mind and——"

"You helped him. It's only natural."

The inspector's face grew grim as he watched them, and there was a trace of bitterness in his voice.

"I see you know one another," he muttered. "Molly, I shouldn't have thought you'd——"

"Oh, what else could I do? His father was dying—wanting to see him."

"And he talked you into helping him? I told you he had a plausible tongue." Pomeroy turned on his prisoner. "Well, you'll not be trying your confidence stunts again for a while, Saunders. I guess we'll put you away for five years or so this time."

Cecil Farmery did not look at him. His eyes were still fixed on Molly. "Didn't you know the inspector was here?" he asked.

"Of course I didn't! I'm not a Judas."

"I'm glad. It would have—spoilt things, wouldn't it? If it's just a bit of bad luck, we'll have to put up with it. All right, Inspector. I'll come quietly."

Pomeroy did not move. He, too, was looking at Molly.

"You know all about him?" he said slowly. "You brought him here?"

She flushed. "Yes."

"And when I was asking for your help, you knew——"

"Yes. I knew." Molly suddenly made up her mind. "Pom-Pom! Let him go!"

"Certainly not!"

"But, Pom-Pom, he's going straight."

The inspector laughed grimly. "I've heard that tale before."

"But it's true this time. I know it is! He'd have been out of England in two days, but for his father. Married to a nice girl, Pom-Pom. Making a fresh start."

"I told you; he could persuade anyone to believe anything."

Molly wrung her hands, remembering the scene by old Farmery's bedside.

"He wasn't lying!" she cried. "I know he wasn't!"

"You don't know, Molly." Pomeroy's voice was cold. "You only think so—and I must say I'm surprised that you could act in this way. I told you it would mean quite a good deal to me if I could catch this man."

"But, Pom-Pom, don't you see? He's——"

"Excuse me, Miss O'Rourke," Cecil Farmery broke in. "Please, don't quarrel with your—friend, because of me. I'm not worth it. Inspector, I can't expect you to believe me, but as some justification for what Miss O'Rourke has done for me, I want to tell you that every word of my story is true. I *was* going straight. I *was* going to Australia with a girl who believes in me. I had a safe hiding-place, and should not have left it until the day we sailed but for the S O S about my father."

Pomeroy looked at him curiously. "You thought it was worth taking the risk?"

"He died happy."

"Didn't he know you were a crook."

"Yes." For the first time Farmery's voice faltered. "He did. I thought he'd no idea, but he—he knew a lot more than I thought. That's why he wanted to see me so much. He made me promise—promise that I'd start again. I satisfied him."

He threw back his shoulders. "Shall we go, Inspector?"

A trace of indecision showed on Pomeroy's pleasant face. Molly watched him anxiously as he dropped into a chair. She had asked him to let Farmery go, but she knew he could not do this. It was more than his job at the Yard was worth.

She turned to look at Farmery. He was waiting patiently, complete dejection plain in his attitude. It must have been a terrible shock to find that his father knew all about him. And yet he had not mentioned this until it was more or less dragged from him.

He must be speaking the truth. And that poor girl would be waiting somewhere, waiting in an agony of doubt for his return, probably blaming herself for letting him go.

If he was speaking the truth! Molly's eyes fixed on something behind the chair in which Pomeroy was sitting, and a wild idea came to her. Here was a way in which she could save Farmery, a way in which she could send him back to the girl who was waiting for him.

In the heavy oppressive silence that filled the office, she slowly edged her way towards the back of the inspector's chair. Frowning, immersed in his thoughts, he apparently did not notice her. Silently she fingered the apparatus which stood in the corner, overflow from the crowded casualty room across the corridor.

It was an anæsthetic stand, holding two cylinders of gas. Hanging from a hook was the mask complete with its rubber bag. One turn of that valve would fill the bag with gas; and the mask held over Pom-Pom's face would keep him motionless, insensible, while Farmery made his escape.

Cautiously, she unhooked the mask and held it up. She motioned to Farmery, indicating that he should spring forward and hold the inspector while she administered the anæsthetic. He frowned. In a moment, he shook his head.

He wouldn't do it! He wouldn't gain his own safety at her expense! Molly's lips tightened. She knew now that he had told her the truth.

With sudden rapid movements, she turned the valve of one of the cylinders and clapped the mask on to Pom-Pom's face. Taken by surprise, he struggled to escape from it, but she managed to hold it close. The gas hissed loudly as it rushed into the bag; and in a very few moments the inspector lay back motionless in his chair, breathing heavily, noisily.

"Be quick!" she cried. "Go out the way you came in. You'll be safe."

"You mustn't do this. You can't! Your friendship with the inspector——"

"Never mind. I can't see you taken to prison."

"I won't go. I won't let you——"

"Please! Remember who's waiting for you."

Farmery hesitated, his face troubled.

"Go!" Molly almost screamed at him. "I dare not keep this over his mouth any longer. He'll come round very soon. Hurry!"

"All right." Farmery moved quickly towards the door. "I'll tell her what you've done for me. . . ."

Molly dropped the mask, feeling suddenly sick. She stood looking at the door as it closed behind Cecil Farmery. In a moment a low chuckle startled her. She turned, amazed to see that Pom-Pom was laughing at her.

"Pom-Pom!" she cried. "Oh, are you all right?"

"Sure! Why not?"

"You'll never forgive me, will you?"

"Shan't I? What about that spot of dinner we were going to have?"

"Oh, Pom-Pom! I——"

"Don't worry, my dear. I'm sure you've done the right thing. At first I thought you'd been fooled. But I happened to see you giving Farmery his opportunity."

"You saw me?"

"Yes. You've forgotten that little mirror on the wall there. Where you powder your nose. When he shook his head, when he wouldn't take that chance of escape, I knew he was on the level this time. I'd have liked to let him go, but I didn't see how I could. We're not allowed to do that kind of thing at the Yard, you know. And then you—bless you!—helped me out of the difficulty. Did I give a good imitation of a man being anæsthetised?"

"You mean you weren't——"

"I don't think you know much about these things Molly. At a guess, I'd say you turned the wrong valve. Gave me oxygen instead of laughing gas." Pomeroy rose to his feet, smiling. "Anyhow, it hasn't destroyed my appetite for dinner.

"Oh, Pom-Pom!" Molly's blue eyes glowed as she looked at him. "You are a darling!"

Short Short Story by

W. A. Sweeney

Rich Man *Murdered*

There were no chairs . . . a brazier to make the toast.

THERE was no doubt about the fact that Sailsbury had talent, but still, through some lack of organising power perhaps, he had not the success he deserved. When the terrible event in his life burst, like an abscess of misfortune, to crown a long-drawn-out agony, he was living in a room which struck me, the first time I visited it, not as a real room but a room one sees upon the stage.

It had an extraordinarily high ceiling, as the building had been a college before it was abandoned as such— oh, about fifty years before—and converted into cheap rooms for the very poor. When I first had the pleasure of having tea and toast with Sailsbury there were no chairs — boxes to sit on, and a brazier to make the toast—and there were pots and pans even on the bed, which was made up of boxes, again skilfully arranged. A rope reached from somewhere near the disused fireplace to the door, and it hung heavy with Sailsbury's washing. When you opened the door the rope swung back and the washing dipped nearly to the floor.

Sailsbury was a writer, young and clever, but unsuccessful. There was no gas or electricity in this building for the very poor, and he wrote and read by an oil lamp. I was interested and charmed by his room, like most people who are not obliged to live in such rooms, and when I said so to Sailsbury, crouched over his charcoal fire, his pale face creased in an odd, melancholy smile. Several times I went and had tea with Sailsbury.

Then, suddenly, came the murder.

The circumstances were as follows. Sailsbury had been recommended, in one of those vague, rather indifferent, but-I-would-do-a-good-turn-if-I-could sort of ways as a secretary to Sir Harold Slobury, and that gentleman made an appointment with him for two o'clock in the afternoon. Sir Harold Slobury represented all the principles (or lack of principles) that Sailsbury detested, but one must eat. What happened in that interview, which took place in Sir Harold Slobury's private office, I don't really know, but I know that I was waiting outside the door of Sailsbury's queer room (he had invited me to eat brazier toast and tea) when he came back from Sir Harold Slobury.

"I've been looking for a job," he said, unlocking the door. "Sorry to have kept you waiting. Secretary—some kind of a secretary—to Sir Harold Slobury. I may tell you I didn't get it."

"I'm dashed sorry to hear that," I said. "What was the matter?"

I sat down on a box and Sailsbury set about fanning up the charcoal and getting the tea ready. "The swine insulted me," he said, "that was the matter. I'm not sorry I didn't get it. I had the satisfaction of punching him on the nose." He fanned the charcoal.

"Good lord! What happened, anyway?"

He looked up from the fire suddenly. "Damn it! I've left my hat behind me in the turmoil of the moment." He laughed. "Came all this way without realising I hadn't a hat! Shows you how I was moved, my son."

"But what did he say?"

"Oh, he talked to me in a manner that made my blood boil, that's all. I don't wish to think about it, it humiliates me." He glanced over at a pile of manuscript reposing on another box. "I wish to heaven I had sold that serial. The *Morning Sun* turned it down this morning. Oh well . . . The water won't be long in boiling now. How's tricks with you?"

There was a terrible depression, fatigue and bitterness about Sailsbury, and I talked of this and that and ignored the Sir Harold Slobury incident.

After I left him that evening he was arrested in connection with the murder of Sir Harold Slobury.

Slobury, it seems, was discovered shot dead about three quarters of an hour after Sailsbury had been with him. When Sailsbury had arrived he had sent his secretary out on some errand, and when the secretary returned he found Sir Harold Slobury dead. The office was a small one, one of the many branch offices that composed the cobweb of Sir Harold's financial activities, and in the outer part of the establishment there was only one rather aged clerk who sat all day marking mysterious things in a ledger.

In Sailsbury's room they discovered a revolver, four chambers full and one empty. The bullets were of the same calibre as that which had killed Sir Harold Slobury.

"That revolver," said Sailsbury, at the beginning of the inquiry, "dates from the time when I was employed on the *Daily Sentinel*. I was on night work, and coming home from work in the early hours I was attacked once. There was a lot of hold-up business going on about that time, and I got that revolver to protect myself. I never used it except once in the country when I tried it on a bottle to see if it worked. Hence the missing cartridge."

He was the last person seen with Sir Harold Slobury, and, particularly after he told the story of his row with him, he was charged with the murder. At the beginning Sailsbury defended himself vigorously; he told, candidly, the full story of his conversation with Sir Harold Slobury and how that crooked financier had suggested to him ("because he knew I was poverty-stricken!" cried Sailsbury) that he should employ his intellectual capacity and literary talent in furthering Sir Harold Slobury's usurious ends, and how he had arisen from the chair and punched the financier on the nose. There were many revolvers like his, he pointed out to the police, and many bullets of the same calibre.

But suddenly, it seemed, he ceased to defend himself with any enthusiasm. At his trial he struck me as lethargic, and I believed him guilty like the rest of the public.

That trial was a sensation. The story of poor Sailsbury's room was told graphically by his lawyer; the story of his lack of success, bitterness, poverty, the foul insult shot into the teeth of a man of letters —that lawyer played up and down on the arpeggios of sentiment and lack of positive proof, till the jury hardly knew whether they were deciding if Sailsbury had committed a murder or whether he *should* have committed a murder, anyway, in the circumstances.

He was acquitted, much to the satisfaction of everybody. The Press applauded the verdict, discreetly. Sailsbury was a good-looking fellow, with a sympathetic face, and he emerged from the obscurity of a room furnished with boxes to the limelight of a glittering, poetic hero who has killed something foul (for the defence showed how particularly undesirable Slobury was) to protect something spiritual, noble, his art, his uncontaminated talent.

I was allowed to visit Sailsbury when he was in prison awaiting trial.

"Did you really kill him, Sailsbury?" I asked. "He deserved it long ago, anyway."

He looked at me and then nodded. "Don't let us talk about it, please," he said, almost pleadingly.

"You'll get off," was all I said.

At the end of the trial I had to leave England for France, and when I returned, a few months later, I looked up Sailsbury. He was living in a beautifully furnished flat now, and received me dressed in a suit that did justice to his tailor and to Sailsbury's good-looking make-up.

"Things have changed," I murmured, looking around. Flowers and an elegant bookcase . . . A typewriter on a table that asked to be worked at.

"Better than the days of the boxes and the toast," said Sailsbury, grinning. "I'm prosperous now. There's nothing like crime, my boy. The *Morning Sun* bought that serial, after all. The *Sentinel* has tied me up in a contract for a series of articles—fine money, too! The fact is, I have too much work on my hands since that trial. Honestly! Would you care to give me a hand? I'm booked up for lectures—women's societies—articles, stories and what not, till I am almost dithery—but I refuse nothing. Oh, no, not after what I've gone through. *You* know . . . you remember when——" He broke off, for someone was ringing at the door. "Excuse me."

He was some time away, quite a considerable time. When he returned he said, counting some money which he had taken from his wallet, "Can you lend me five pounds? I'll give you a cheque for it directly."

I passed over the five pounds and he left the room again. When he came back he stood in the middle of the room, tapping a cigarette on the back of his hand, with a queer humourless smile on his lips. Then he looked around and said,

"This is more comfortable than the room with the boxes, eh?" He glanced at the little clock. "Gee, I must leave you shortly. Got a lecture. Do you know who that was who came to see me? I'll tell you—a blackmailer."

"What do you mean, Sailsbury?"

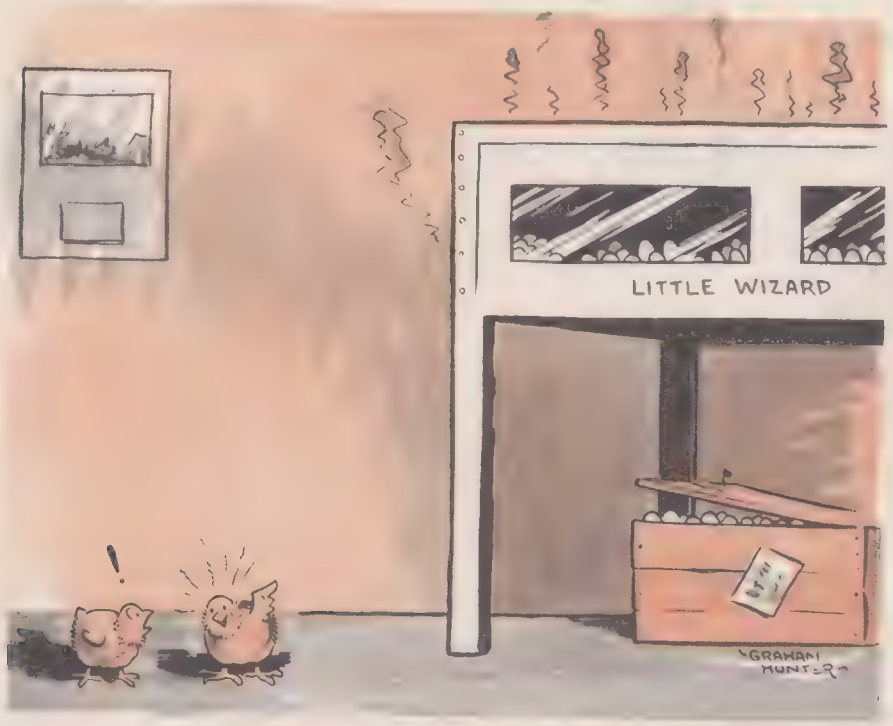
"What I say. *That was the man who really killed Slobury.* He told me why—and how. I'm paying him to keep his mouth shut. Damn it, I don't want to lose all this!" He looked all round the room and grinned.

Laughter

The "PASSING SHOW" Smile Section

"How Joe Blobbs became famous as a tipster."

"I'd like to send a 'Wish you were here' card to my boss."

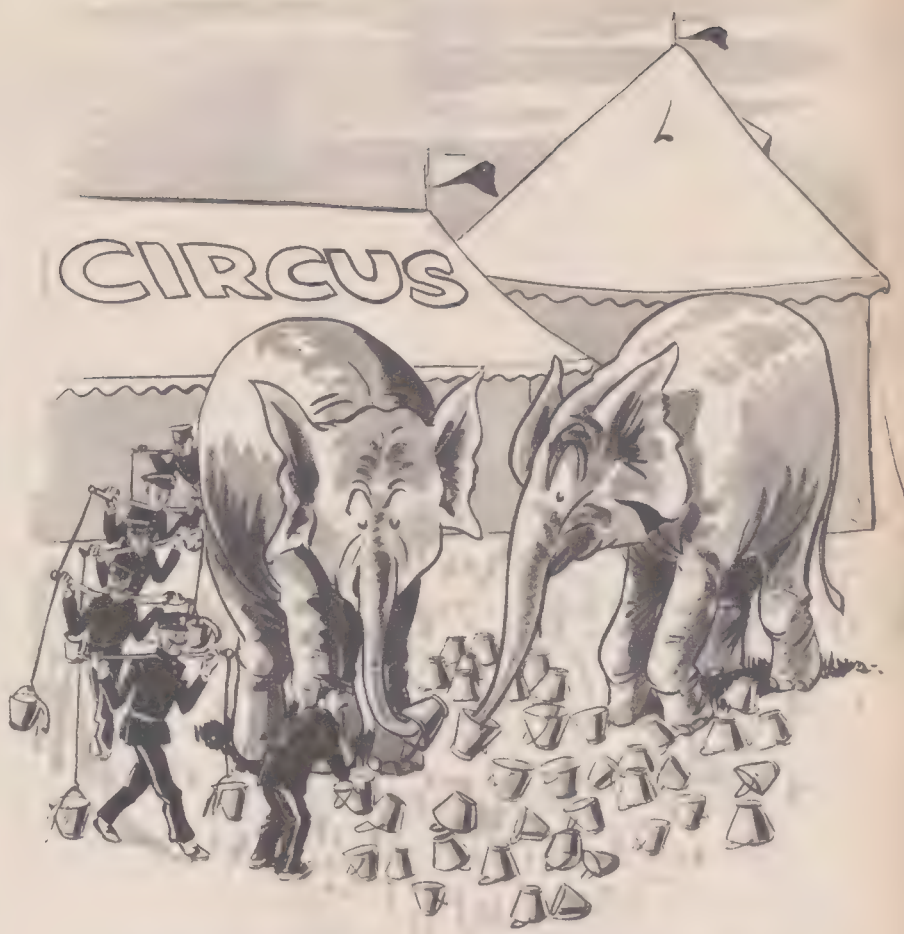


"Bill, I'd like you to meet my mother."

"It's lucky we've got a water-diviner in the brigade, George."

"That was a very nice farmer we stayed with last night."
"Yes, but what a salesman."

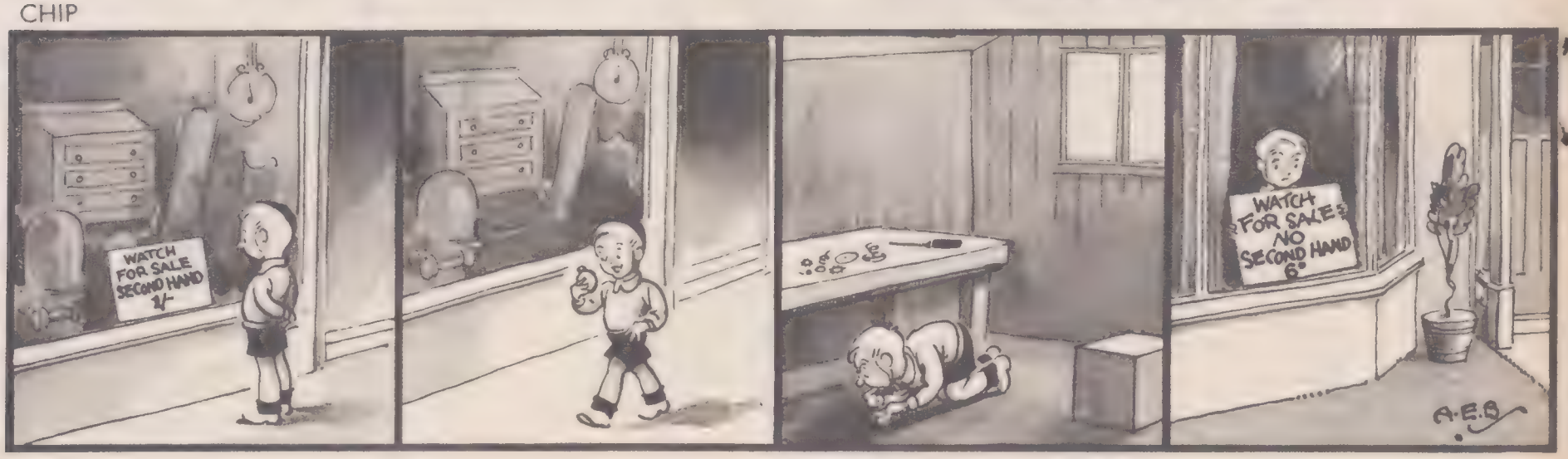
The tailor goes in for aeroplane advertising.



"I'd like to catch that boy who gave them the salted peanuts."

"Good morning, Mrs. Gilhooley."

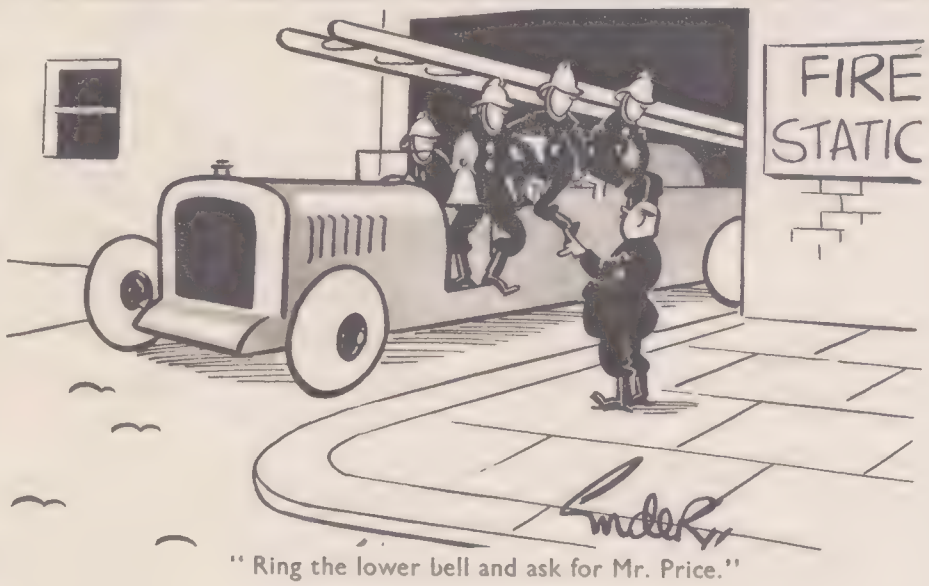
CHIP



A MAN IN A HURRY

by A. C. BARRETT

" You're sacked ! I pay you to find diamonds and you get nothing but oil !"



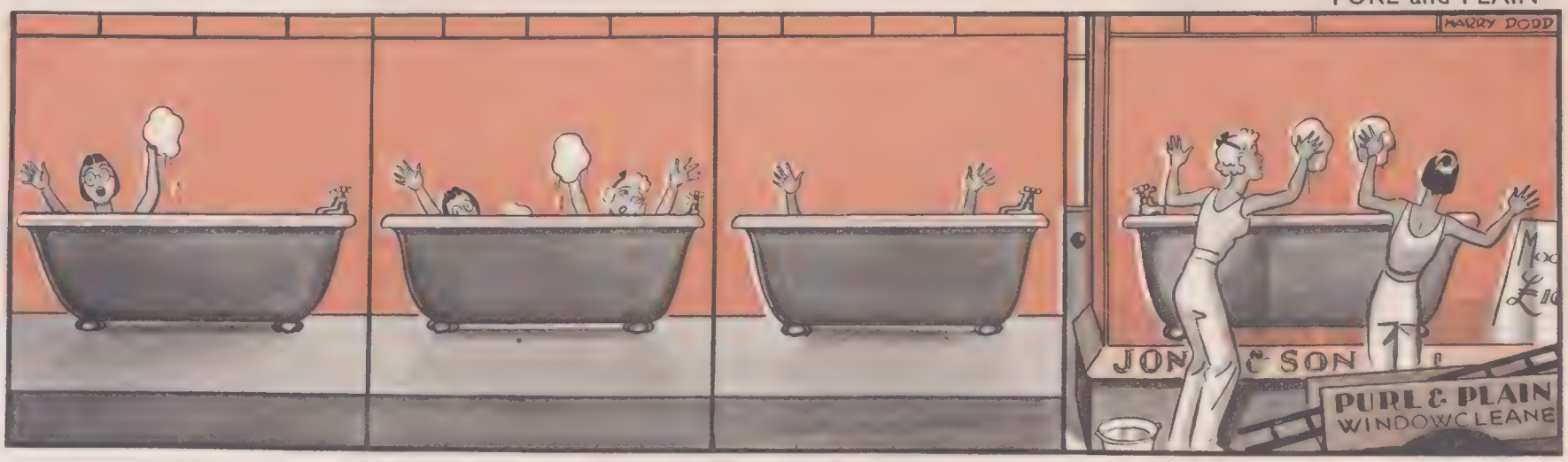
" Ring the lower bell and ask for Mr. Price."

LAUGH WITH THE WORLD

The oil lamp gave out, but fortunately the Smiths came in their car and saved the situation. *Berliner Illustrierte, Berlin.*

"My sweetheart is to blame, captain. She insisted on trying her new hair bleach on it." *Illustrierte, Oslo.*

PURL and PLAIN

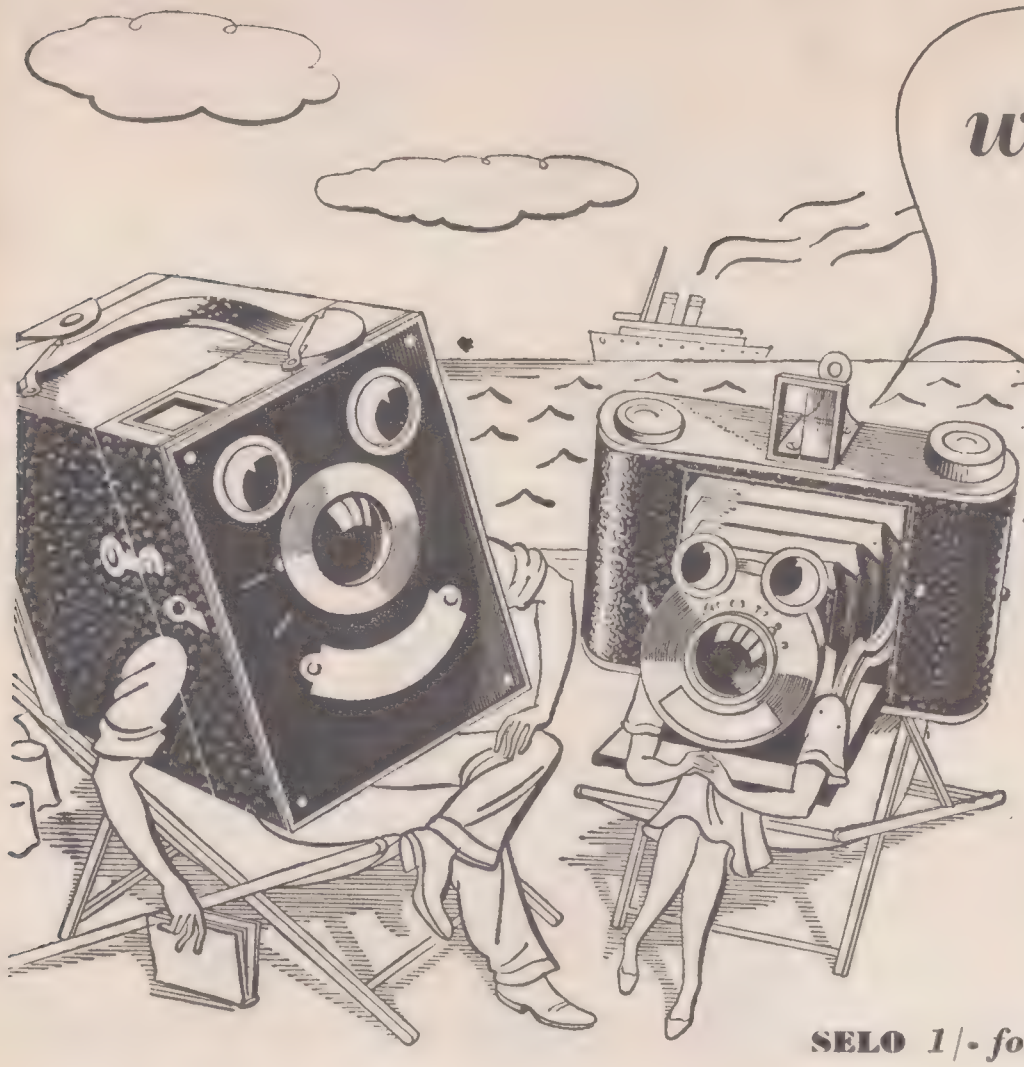


"That's the first thing I hit in my Learner days."

How to be smart this year by the sea?
Thinks me I'se sure I'se hit it!"
I rode the waves on me rubber gee-
Til' Fido went an' bit it!

OLD BILL and BERT

by BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER



we must have **SELO** *films*

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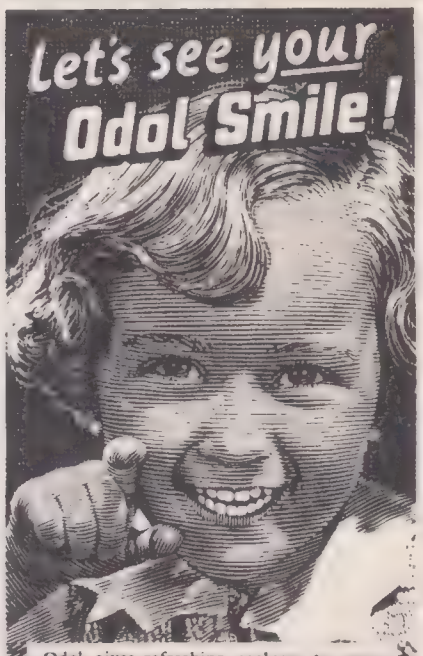

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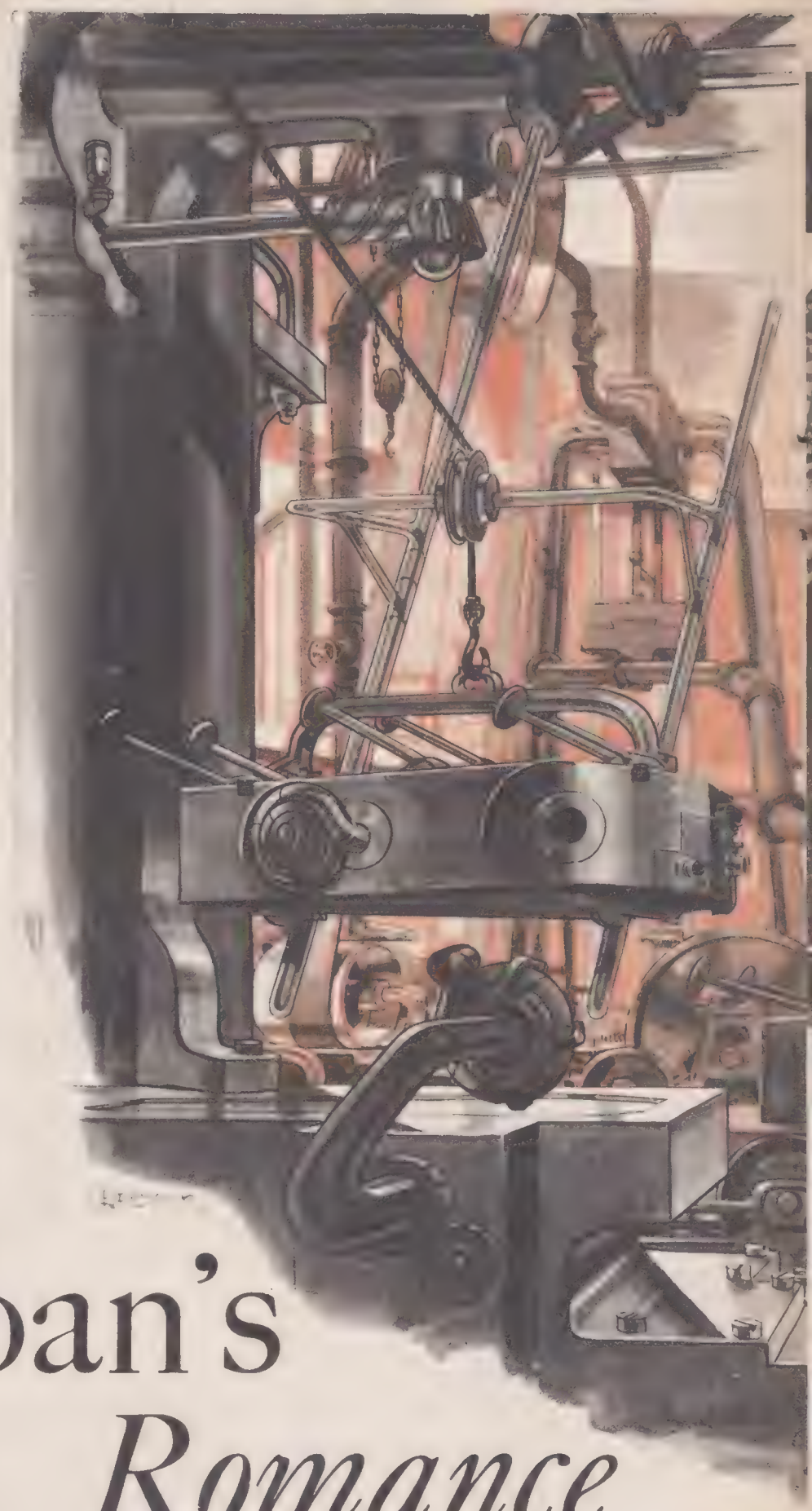
Gar. 5

READ THIS FIRST Two space-ships have landed on Mars. The first to arrive was the *Gloria Mundi* carrying a party of Englishmen—Dale Curtance, millionaire daredevil aviator, Doctor Grayson, Andrew Froud, journalist, and Geoffrey Dugan—and Joan Shirning, a beautiful stowaway who as the daughter of a scientist wanted to prove her father's theories about life on Mars. The second space-ship, the *Tovaritch*, sent to Mars by the Russian Government, is commanded by Comrade Karaminoff, who has gone to the *Gloria Mundi* to tell Dale that their American rivals have also prepared a space-ship to make the journey. Meanwhile, Joan has been kidnapped by one of the machine-like-people who live on the planet and taken to a city where she meets a tall, red-haired man. He teaches her to speak the language of Mars while she is in a trance and then, after questioning her about the Gloria Mundi's flight through space, shows her a television screen in which she can see Dale and Karaminoff discussing the American space-ship. Now read on



Joan's *Romance*

THERE was a pause during which Karaminoff introduced the other two Russians whom Dugan had admitted. He added: "And now, I think, it is necessary for us to have some discussion."

"Just a minute," Froud put in. "I'm a bit puzzled by several things. Did you start after or before us?"

"A day or so later."

"And with millions of square miles of planet to choose from you had the luck to land next door to us?"

"Oh, no, not luck." The Russian shook his head. "We followed you with telescopes. We saw the flames of your rockets as you landed and we marked the spot. Then we held off a little."

Dugan stared first at him and then at Dale. Both of them knew that the *Gloria Mundi* could never have performed such a manoeuvre. An involuntary tinge of respect came into Dugan's voice as he said:

"Your *Tovaritch* must be a wonderful ship."

"She is," Karaminoff told him with complacence.

There was a pause. Karaminoff crossed to the western window and looked out thoughtfully. The dreary bushes were waving their papery leaves, the breeze raised occasional scurries of reddish dust, but his eyes were not on these things. He was watching an entirely terrestrial phenomenon—the Union Jack fluttering from its pole.

"I see that you have staked a claim," he said, turning to face Dale.

"You'd have done the same if you had got here first," Dugan put in impatiently.

Karaminoff smiled. He said conversationally:

"I am not here to annex or conquer."

"Then just what are you here for?"

Karaminoff turned to look at his two companions.

"Did I not tell you how it would be?" he said, with a smile and a shrug.

One of them answered him rapidly in Russian. Karaminoff said:

"Comrade Vassiloff is bored. He wishes us to—er—cut the cackle."

"Comrade Vassiloff is a sensible man," said the doctor. "Lead out your horses."

"I will. It is this. There are to be no territorial claims on this land by any nation, government or groups of persons. In such useful exchanges as can be made between Earth and Mars, no nation shall receive preferential treatment. Such commerce shall be under direct governmental control and not open to exploitation by individuals. Mars shall retain the right of self-government and management of policy both internally and externally. There shall be [illegible]"

"And yet," the doctor put in, "you intend to invite them into union with the Soviets? That hardly seems compatible."

"If by their free choice they elect——"

"Well they won't have the chance. We claim this territory by right of discovery, and we're damn' well going to have it."

Froud yawned and crossed to the window. He stared out for a few seconds and then beckoned Karaminoff to his side.

"Don't you think you'd better open negotiations with the 'citizens' before you formulate any more of the constitution? See, there's a potential comrade lurking in the bushes over there."

Karaminoff followed the direction of his finger. He could just make out something which moved among the branches and he saw the shine of sunlight upon metal. At that moment one of the three Russians who had remained outside the *Gloria Mundi* came running to the window. He was pointing excitedly in the same direction. Karaminoff nodded and turned back to the rest.

"Very well, we will go now. I will let you know the outcome of my negotiations, but whatever they are, believe me that this is one time that the English are not going to get away with their land grabbing."

Nobody answered him. The three Russians put on their oxygen masks and passed one by one out of the airlock. The *Gloria Mundi's* crew watched them rejoin their companions. There was much excited conversation and frequent indications of the bushes, and the party began to move off in that direction. It paused beside Dale's post.

Continuing 'Stowaway to Mars' by John Beynon

They saw Karaminoff look up at the flag and then back at the ship. The breathing mask hid his features, but they could guess at the smile beneath it. One of the Russians crouched and then launched himself in what would have been an impossible leap on Earth. His outstretched hand caught the flag and tore it free from the pole as he dropped.

"Oh, no you don't!" Dugan shouted. Before the rest could stop him he was across the room and into the airlock.

Karaminoff was reaching up to tie a red flag with a white hammer and sickle upon it to the bare pole when the man beside him suddenly clutched his arm and spun round. One of the others swivelled, firing from his hip at the entrance port. Karaminoff, apparently unmoved, finished fixing his flag and stepped back, waving a hand to the occupants of the ship, but only Froud was at the window to watch him. Dale and the doctor were at the airlock waiting anxiously till the pressures should equalise. The door swung open to reveal Dugan sitting on the floor. His face was purple, and blood was trickling down his leg.

"Silly young fool," said the doctor.

"Ricochet off the outer door," Dugan panted. "In the leg."

"Lucky for you it isn't asphyxiation. Let me look at it."

"Missed the swine, too," Dugan gasped. "He couldn't reach very high, so his flag's only flying at half-mast, if that's any consolation to you," said Froud from the window. "Karaminoff's splitting the gang. The bloke you pipped is going home with another. He himself and the other three are making for the bushes." He suddenly left the window and dashed across the room. "Where's that damned telephoto got to? Here, Dale, help me get this thing rigged up. What a chance! Must get a shot at Karaminoff greeting the animated tinware.—That's it, right up to the window.—What'll we call it? Look! Look, there's Comrade Clockwork coming out of the bushes now. Oh, boy!"

◆ ◆ ◆

A mechanical voice chattering urgently cut across all other sounds. Its speed and harshness made it impossible for Joan to catch the words, but she thought it was saying something about a rocket. Vaygan flipped over a switch and the interior of the *Gloria Mundi* faded from the screen, simultaneously her crew's voices were cut off.

"Where?" Vaygan asked sharply.

The voice gabbled a string of unintelligible directions which started him readjusting his dials and switches. The screen lost its opaqueness once more and took on a uniform purple tinge. Until a wisp of tenuous cloud drifted across, Joan did not realize that it was showing the Martian sky. Vaygan was watching it intently, slowly turning his dials. Presently a bright spark slid in from one side, and he gave a grunt. Evidently he had found what he wanted. He manipulated the controls to keep it in the middle of the screen.

"What is it?" Joan asked.

"Another rocket—like yours."

"Another?" She remembered what the Russian had said about an American rocket.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHESTER

These were not machines as Joan knew them, but something altogether new.

They watched for a time in silence. Swiftly the spark grew from a mere dot to a flaring mass as the rocket dived lower and closer. The tubes were working furiously to break her long fall, belching out vivid gushes of white-hot fire which was carried back along her sides to die in tattered banners of flame in her wake. Nearer and nearer she came, falling like a meteor wrapped in her own inferno of flame. It seemed impossible that in such a blast the ship herself should not be incandescent. Yet she was not out of control. Perceptibly she was slowing. But Vaygan murmured:

"She's coming in too fast—far too fast."

He could alter the angle of view now so that they seemed to look down on her as they followed her course. The Martian landscape streamed below her in an approaching blurr. For a second she slipped out of the picture. Vaygan spun a control and picked her up again. She was dropping fast. Her rockets were erupting like miniature volcanoes, but still her speed was prodigious. The sandhills below her hurtled past indistinguishably. Joan's fists clenched as she watched, and she found herself holding her breath.

"They can't—they can't land at that speed," she cried. "Oh!"

The rocket was nearly down now. A few hundred feet only above the desert, still going a thousand miles an hour. Joan gave a little moan. It was too late now. They could never get up again; they would have to land. The rocket sank lower, skimming the tops of the sandhills. Then the inevitable end began.

She touched and sprang, twirling and twisting, end over end a hundred feet into the air, as though the planet had tried to hurl her back into the sky. She dropped. Again she was flung up like a huge spinning shuttle gleaming with flame and reflected sunlight. She fell for the third time into a belt of bushes, firing them as she bounced, bumped and slithered towards the canal beyond.

The embankment almost saved her. For an uncertain moment she teetered on the edge. Then she tilted and half-rolled, half slid into the water. A huge frothy column rose into the purple sky and two hundred yards of the bank went out of existence as she blew up.

Vaygan watched the water pouring out over the desert and the flame racing along the line of dry bushes. But Joan saw nothing of this, for she had fainted.

Joan recovered to find Vaygan's arm supporting her while with his other hand he held a bowl for her to drink from. At the same time he was talking loudly, issuing instructions for the repair of the broken embankment and warning of the fire spreading through the bushes, apparently to the empty room.

As her eyes opened his tone changed and he looked at her anxiously.

"You're all right now?"

"I think so. It was silly of me to faint. I'm sorry."

"Does it often happen?"

She shook her head. "No. It was seeing that terrible crash."

He looked at her as though he were puzzled.

"Emotion? Can emotion do that to you?" he said wonderingly.

"Do you mean to say that you've never seen anyone faint before?"

"Never. We don't."

Joan looked over his shoulder at the wall beyond. The vision panel had resumed its customary smoky-grey appearance.

"That's a very wonderful instrument," she said. "But I don't like it. It spies on people."

He seemed surprised that it was new to her, and amused when she told him that television on Earth needed a transmitter.

"But how primitive! This is much easier. Two beams are directed at once. The point where they meet is focused on the screen. By narrowing the beams their intensity is increased in a smaller field bringing the subject up to life-size if necessary. It is quite simple."

Joan shook her head. "It sounds complicated to me. I'm afraid I'm not very good at understanding things like that."

He listened with amusement as she took him in as much detail as she could remember through the exchanges between her companions and the Russians, but when she had finished, there was something wistful in his expression. For a time he did not speak, but sat with his eyes on the window, gazing unseeingly over the desert.

"What are you going to do? Do you think your people will ally with them?" she asked.

(continued on next page)

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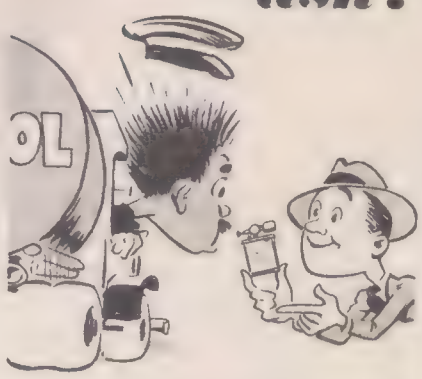

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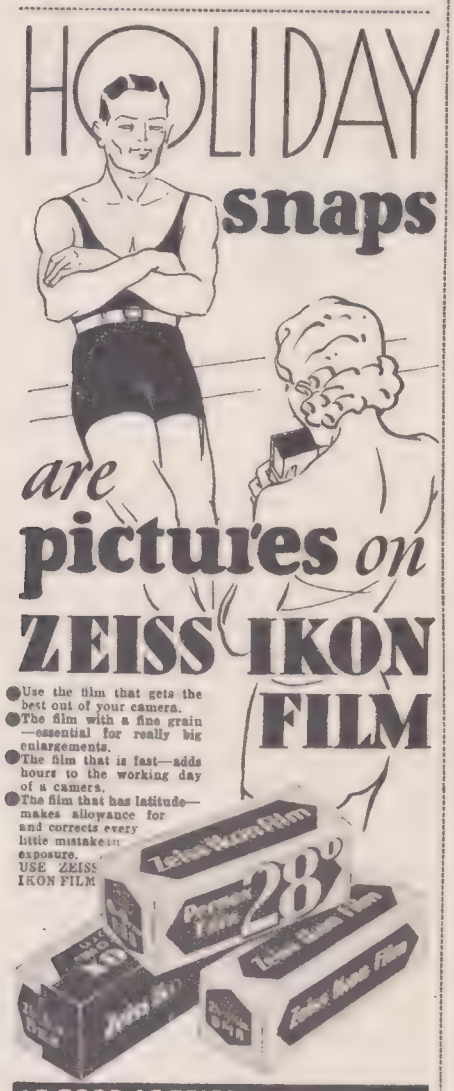

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Continuing Joan's Romance

"That? Oh, I wasn't thinking of that. It was of the men in your rocket and in the other: such men as we used to have here. The other is for the machines to decide, it is their world now."

"'Their world,'" Joan repeated. "Then the machines do rule you."

"In a sense the machine must rule from the moment it is put to work. One surrenders to its higher efficiency—that is why it was made. But it is really truer to say that we co-exist."

Joan got up. "Won't you show me your machines? Let me see them at work—whatever it is that they do—then, perhaps, I shall understand better. I'm still not at home with the idea of an individual, independent machine."

"It may help you to understand both us and the machines," Vaygan agreed.

They left the building together by way of the airlock which she had used the previous night. On Vaygan's insistence she was wearing a Martian space suit, a smaller edition of the one he wore himself. It was far less cumbersome than the overall from the ship, but the thin, silvery material of which it was made insulated her from the outer temperature completely, and the glass-like globe covering her head was far less tedious to wear than an oxygen mask. Thin diaphragms set in the globe could transmit her own voice and pick up external noises, and as she crossed the threshold of the outer doors she became aware of sounds of movement all about her.

Joan watched the six-legged machines scurrying across the open space in front of her. Some were carrying burdens in the tentacles, others held the tentacles coiled to their sides. Most of them moved at a similar constant speed, though now and then one obviously in a hurry would scamper past, skilfully weaving its way through the lines at twice the average pace. The sight of the interweaving streams of traffic and the kaleidoscopic shifting of bright moving parts had a dazzling, dizzying effect on her. She waited for the confusion which a collision must bring, but there were no entanglements. No two machines even touched, for though there was no mass control the precise judgment of each appeared to be infallible. For the first time she felt an inkling of what Vaygan had tried to tell her.

These were not machines as she knew them. They were not the advanced counterparts of anything on Earth, but something altogether new. They did not live, in her sense of the word, yet they were not inert metal. They were a queer hybrid between the sentient and the insentient.

And she could not quell a rising sense of misgiving and outrage; she was unable to silence the voice of prejudice and self-defence which, to crush the suspicion that these monsters might be better fitted to survive than were her own kind, insisted that they should not exist and that they were in some ill-defined, superstitious sense wrong.

An idea more fantastic, yet more acceptable to her prejudices occurred to her.

"They haven't brains inside those cases?" she asked Vaygan beside her.

"Yes——Oh, I see what you mean. No, we've never been able to transplant a human brain into a machine, though it has been tried. It would not have been very useful if it had succeeded. For instance, you would have seen a dozen collisions by now if human brains had been in charge. Our responses are not quick enough. You are wasting time by thinking anthropomorphically. The machines are—the machines."

He led her across the open space (once, he told her, a garden which their utmost efforts had failed to preserve; now a waste, as aridly depressing as a parade ground) and turned into one of the wider streets which ran from it. Joan kept closely beside him, overcoming with difficulty the fear that the rushing mechanisms about them would trample them to death by a misjudgment. To the end she could never fully believe that their control was superior to her own, but she grew easier as she noticed how the traffic divided for them and that danger was never really imminent. After a short time she had recovered enough equanimity to listen to Vaygan's talk.

In its time, he was telling her, Hanno had been the home of between five and six million people. Nowadays the machines had adapted much of it for their own use while the rest stood empty save for the airtight building where the surviving men and women dwelt.

"Where are they?" Joan put in. "I haven't seen anyone but you yet. When can I see the rest?"

"Perhaps to-morrow. They insist that you shall be medically examined first. You may easily be a carrier of Earth germs which would be fatal to us."

"But if to them, why not to you?"

"Someone had to take the risk." He smiled at her. "I'm glad it was I."

Vaygan led on. He showed her magnificent halls, bare and deserted, great libraries where were books printed upon imperishable sheets, but with the characters all but faded from the pages. She saw that long stretches of the shelves gaped empty. The machines had taken all of any use to them: the rest dealt with human beings—they were no longer needed. He took her through galleries which he himself had never seen before, filled with sculptures upon which the settling dust had mounted age by age. They went into theatres whose strange, circular stages had known no actors for thousands of years. He tried, in a place not unlike a television or cinema theatre, to give her a glimpse of the thriving Hanno of long ago, but the machinery was corroded and useless. He showed her a hall filled with queer little cars which had once raced along the streets outside. She was surprised at the preservation of it all. A city on Earth neglected for a fraction of the time that Hanno had been empty would have fallen into mounds of ruin. Vaygan ascribed it partly to the dryness of Mars and the lack of growing things, and partly to the hardness of the materials.

"Now I will show you that part of Hanno which is not dead," he said.

He took her into one of the factories where machines made more machines. She looked about it, hoping to understand a little of what was going on and vainly trying to change a lifetime's habits of thought. She felt that once her mind would accept the idea of a living machine as an accomplished fact she would be able to sympathise with Vaygan's attitude. But still her reason balked at it. To advance the theory in the living-room of the *Gloria Mundi* had been one thing: to accept the reality of it was quite another. Was it, she wondered, a part of that inadaptability Vaygan had spoken about? She followed thoughtfully as he led on into another hall.

"This is one of the repair shops," he told her.

She noticed the different sections allotted to the mending or replacement of damaged tentacles, legs, lenses or other parts.

"There seem to be a lot of breakages," she said.

Joan was reminded of a question which she had several times intended to ask: "Those queer machines in the bushes and on the desert—there's nothing like them here. What are they?"

"Mistakes, mostly. Mistakes or experiments which have either escaped or been turned out there to see how they survive."

"But why haven't you destroyed them?"

"They don't worry us and they seldom come near the cities. Usually they roam about in bands. You see, they have no factories and if anything goes wrong, they must rebuild themselves from one another's parts. There is still such a thing as luck in the world, and it's not impossible that the 'mistakes' may prove valuable in teaching the rest something.

After her medical examination—an affair of blood-testing machines, mechanical ultra short-wave cameras and automatic response registers—Vaygan took her back to the room on the third level of the central building. She shed her air-suit and helmet with relief.

"When shall we know when I can meet the others?" she asked. He thought it likely that the reports of the tests would be made the next morning.

"And what about my friends?" she went on. "What is happening to them?"

"The machines are looking after them."

"What do you think they will do?"

"They're going to send them back very soon."

"What!"

"Certainly. Your friends could not live peacefully with our machines. They do not understand them. Nor could your people mix with ours; there is too much difference. Your race is young and ambitious; ours has that peace which the approach of death is said to give to the aged. As a race, we are resigned . . ."

"As a race . . ." Joan said. "But you? What are you thinking as a man, Vaygan?"

His smile was wistful as he turned to her.

"I was not so much thinking as feeling—feeling history."

"History?"

"The growing pains of young civilisations. Mars was not always old, you know. In its adolescence there were ambitions, wars, victories, defeats and, above all, hopes. It was a beautiful world. There were trees, animals, flowers; there were seasons when the leaves came and seasons when they fell; there were men and women in their millions. We have histories . . .

"But then, very many thousands of years ago Mars began to grow old. The water became scarcer and scarcer; that united us. For the first time in our history all the nations worked together, and they built the great canals which kept our soil fertile for many generations. But it was only a temporary victory. There were always desert patches and as time went on they spread like a malignant disease. They drove back the plants until it was only on the canal banks that anything could grow.

"Our air grew thinner. It leaked slowly into space until life in the open became impossible for us. We have put off the end in one way and another; clinging until the last as life always clings. We don't know why. Everything must end in time. In some hundreds of millions of years the sun itself will flicker for the last time and every trace of life will vanish from the system—yet we have struggled to preserve ourselves against our reason for a few generations longer. And so, in spite of all we have done and everything we know, we have come to a dwindling end; a few listless survivors who must spend their lives in a prison of their own building.

"I was thinking of all that we have lost: all that you still have. And of the things that I have never had. We are born old. I never knew the joy, energy and ambitions which are in youth—yet I know the loss and I feel that I have been robbed of my heritage."

He paused and looked at her again, searching her face.

"You don't understand—you can't understand. Youth flows in you; it rises in your veins as sap used to rise in our trees. It colours every thought of yours, this hope, this sense of the future. Even when you are old you will not feel the tired dry barrenness which we can never forget."

"And yet," Joan said gently, "you are not speaking now as if life held nothing for you. You talked before as if you had forgotten emotion, and yet know——"

"I had. I had forgotten it. We must forget it in this world . . . This is not the real Vaygan talking to you now; not the Vaygan you met last night. This is a younger Vaygan; the Vaygan who might have been—a million years ago. The Vaygan who dare not exist now lest he should die of discouragement.

"It is you who have done this to me. You and those others with you. But mostly you, yourself. You have given me a glimpse, a vision of people who still live. There is something—how shall I say?—a spirit in you and around you. It is the life force of young things striving, reaching out, still climbing upward to the peaks of life."

Joan said nothing. She barely followed his words and their meaning was lost, but with her eyes on his she saw more than he told. His hands took hers, trembling a little. His broad chest rose and fell with deeper breaths. It seemed to her as though a lay figure of a man were coming to life.

"You!" he whispered. "You have lent me life for a little while. You have fanned a spark which was almost dead, and it hurts me, Joan. It hurts me . . ."

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Flowers do more than anything to produce an atmosphere of festivity when you are entertaining and well-placed vases and bowls will even divert attention from slightly worn upholstery or shabby carpets.

It is not enough, however, to buy a few flowers and hope for the best. Just as a good cook must mix her ingredients with care and select her menus with discretion, the woman who wants to make her floral decorations a success must take a number of points into consideration. An ordinary glass vase containing a bunch of flowers and some green leaves is a thing of the past. Vases as well as flowers should be suitable to their surroundings. Luxury flowers demand luxury settings; roses and carnations look their best in priceless cut glass or old silver.

Vases that are charming in the country look all wrong in a town home. Those brown mugs, filled with ferns, daffodils, bluebells or foxgloves, which so effectively complete the picture in the country lounge, seem strangely out of place in a modern flat.

The fashion of arranging flowers in bowls followed the introduction of low-ceilinged rooms in modern buildings.

The tendency to have white and "off white" rooms has influenced fashions in flowers. White pottery vases in various designs are now the favourites. They may appear rather uninteresting when empty, but, filled with flowers, one cannot overlook their possibilities.

Lovely effect is obtained with an ivory tinted crackled pottery urn filled with shaded blue larkspur, placed on a parquet floor near a grey-curtained window. Every shaft of sunlight filtered through the blue petals and was reflected on the white painted wall.

These pottery urns are splendid for the leaves and foliage, which have been found so useful during recent years, from a decorative point of view. A great deal of greenery used with flowers is definitely "out," but foliage by itself has great possibilities, especially during seasons when flowers are most expensive. It is well to remember when arranging any kind of leaves to avoid heaviness.

Exquisite effects may be obtained by a light touch. By studying Chinese prints, such as those seen at the recent exhibition, we can learn something of the beauty of a spray of larch, from which nearly all the needles have fallen, but to which several cones adhere. Such a spray in a dull blue or grey pottery vase against a plain light-toned wall satisfies the eye simply by its perfect symmetry. We shall feel cooler on a hot June day after looking at a slender spray of beech, the tender, quivering leaves of which have not yet lost the clear emerald hue of spring.

Exquisite effects may be obtained by a light touch.

When a profusion of flowers is impracticable, it is better to concentrate for effect on one corner or portion of a room, rather than have odd vases here and there. A niche in the wall is always a lucky possession, for it lends itself to all kinds of vases and floral decoration. In such a case, make the niche the centre of interest and remember that a few choice blooms will give a better effect than a larger number of more imperfect ones.

Again we can study the Chinese ideas, especially since the florists have given us such a choice of ornamental blossoms to choose from: prunus, cherry, almond and yellow-blossomed licanthus. What can be more cheering than grey or white pottery filled with slender brown stems from which dangle yellow-green catkins, so delicate in shade that it seems as if the first gleams of February sunshine have been imprisoned within them? When they ripple in the breeze from the window, we are reminded of the tang of March winds in the woodlands.

So great a part does the arrangement of flowers play in some homes that many girls and women take a course in "floral art." I found a number of students studying various schemes for dinner table decoration at the "Dianthus" School of Floral Art, one of the first schools of the kind to be established in London.

The students, many of them come from the Dominions, Canada and Australia, intend taking up floral work professionally, but there are also a number of women who take a short course solely with the idea of being able to make their own homes more beautiful.

I was shown some lovely ideas in table decoration, which even the woman of moderate means might copy for her dinner party. There were flat, moss-filled baskets, in which were arranged a variety of flowers to form an exquisite colour scheme. In one were the plucked

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Vases as well as flowers should be suited to their surroundings.

WOMAN to WOMAN by Mary Collins

petals of deep coral pink carnations set among fragrant tips of deep purple Persian-lilac sprays. This purple grew paler in stocks and turned to blue in the forget-me-nots, which took away any stiffness that might otherwise have resulted from the conventional design of the other flowers. A low bowl could be used instead of the basket, and a charming idea would be to provide tiny matching "favour" posies for each guest.

Sweet-peas in shades of mauve and pink, in sparkling cut glass bowls, are the favourite table decoration of Queen Mary. However, it is not advisable to put sweet-peas in glass vases or bowls, because they discolour the water so quickly.

Once it was considered "smart" to arrange maidenhair or other fern with sweet peas. To-day the blooms are so fine, a little of their own foliage is sufficient. Delicate fronds of ferns look well arranged sparingly in white vases.

Horticulturists seem to have done their utmost to help women with new ideas —freesias are now obtainable in a whole range of colours. Ranculus, lighter to arrange than anemones, are in every shade between gold and deepest carmine. The new "Premier Rose" combines the long woody stalk and luxuriant foliage of the forced varieties with the perfume of the old Damask rose we found in grandmother's garden, and their colour reminds us of her old rose brocades. I would suggest arranging these roses in pewter or white pottery, with spikes of lavender and a sprig or two of rosemary.

Undoubtedly the most fashionable thing in floral arrangement is the mixing of flowers. This is actually an eighteenth century notion, but original combinations are being adopted by the discriminating woman. Here are some suggestions gleaned from a number of famous florists.

Antirrhinums (better known as snapdragons) arranged with tulips, for preference the former in deep shades of rose, and the tulips pale pink. For a large room, delphiniums in a tall urn with sprays of rambler roses, and mixed candytuft set in bowls of mignonette in a room where old-world chintz plays a part.

Reflection should not be forgotten. Long spurred columbines, in a jar by a mirror, and irises not arranged in a conventional vase, but set in a black bowl, with stones and possibly some lively-looking lizard of glass or china, to make them look as though they were growing in their native swamp. When the sunshine throws the shadow of the irises on a light wall, the effect is that of a Japanese print.

Old-fashioned flowers, used in new ways, include sweet-williams broken off just below the heads and arranged in bowls with pinks, wallflowers and pansies. Californian poppies in orange, golden and red tones should be arranged in green glass "witch" bowls. So should marigolds that have now grown so large.

Actually they make splendid window box flowers in towns because they are hardy.

Window boxes do not exactly come within the sphere of floral decoration for indoor use, but since their introduction in so many homes during Jubilee year, they have come to stay, and in most cases they do improve the outlook on a dull street.

Some striking combinations of colour and kinds of flowers are to be found this year in the window boxes of many old houses in the quaint streets about Westminster.

Scarlet anemones and purple pansies are there, but loveliest of all for window boxes is night-scented stock, the perfume of which, after a shower of rain on a summer evening, spells romance and adds glamour to a room already delightful, because it is owned by a woman who knows how to make the best of flowers.

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She clambered ashore and came towards the man in white.

The PRAYING WHEEL

SHORT STORY
by Albert Dorrington
Illustrated by Alfred Sindall

HIGH TIDE with a mountainous surf plunging over the outer reefs of Vanna Island! A tradehouse stood on the cleared rim of the lagoon beach which fronted the open Pacific. A seaman in a white canvas suit sprawled in a chair on the veranda end. Occasionally he rose and stared through a pair of binoculars at a tiny rag of sail that staggered over the knife edge of skyline.

Dimly he made out the face of a shrouded figure at the helm. In the forepart a woman crouched, her face towards the palm-dotted island in the south.

The sailor in the canvas suit whistled softly, wondering what mischance had driven the pair to venture alone on the open Pacific. Later, when the sun-warped boat entered the lagoon, he moved to the strip of beach to welcome his foolhardy visitors. The boat crashed high and dry into the soft warm sand.

The woman in the forepart clambered ashore, the mists of the ocean solitudes in her half-fainting eyes. With the feel of hard coral under her dainty feet she steadied herself as the big man in white canvas confronted her.

"We're sorry to invade your territory, sir," she began with painful deliberation, her glance wandering from his powerful frame to the wide verandahed traderoom within the pandanus belt.

"My name is Branscombe. My husband ran a tradehouse in Levuka until the awful tragedy happened," she told him.

The shrewd eyes of the big man in white went over her and settled on the half-shrouded figure seated in the stern of the boat. A pair of dark sun-glasses protected his eyes from the intolerable glare of the reefs. He was not more than twenty. The vestments he wore belonged to a Chinese religious fraternity, a Buddhist monk in all probability. A torn mariner's chart lay at his feet. It was evident that the brief passage through the reef had unnerved him.

"Why didn't you make Dine island instead of coming here?" the big seaman questioned. "It's two days nearer Levuka. I wouldn't trust myself on a duck pond in that shell of yours."

It was two years since he had looked at the face of a white woman. The very sound of her voice invested his sea-girt atoll with a new sense of homeliness and charm. He had never heard of the Branscombes at Levuka. Then his fine eyes narrowed suddenly.

"I may tell you, Mrs. Branscombe, that you've called on a particular kind of ruffian and outlaw. My name is Hayes—Bully Hayes if you like. My only visitors are the foreign gunboats. And I'm wondering why you came?"

She was young with a touch of fire in her wind-lashed hair. The scour of the driving seas was on her finely cut clothes. Overwhelmed by a sense of her own misfortunes she appeared not to notice the big man's reference to his character and standing.

"I have come to beg your help, Captain Hayes. Last month my husband and eight natives perished in his schooner off Hurricane Point. Everything went with them, money, stores and cargo. Nothing was insured. The tradehouse was in debt. I was left penniless. That is Doctor Lin Toy, my husband's dearest friend. He is a student of Philosophy from the University of Peking."

"Proud to meet him," Hayes declared with sudden warmth. "He's welcome to stretch his legs here, anyway." He beckoned the silent figure in the boat. "Come along, Doc! I guess you're feeling cramped after your long trip!"

Doctor Lin Toy stood up and with an effort that revealed his weariness of body, clambered from the boat. Stooping to the thwarts he dragged a piece of tattered sail from a churn-shaped object, and with difficulty drew it to the beach.

The buccaneer watched critically.

"One of those machines you make cheese with, eh, Doc?"

Lin Toy straightened his shoulders, a wan smile on his sea-burnt face.

"It is a praying wheel I rescued from a fire in our little temple in Levuka. If fortune favours I intend offering it to one of our chief priests in Sydney. It belonged originally to the Buddhist shrine at the

(continued on page 30)

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Continuing THE PRAYING WHEEL

Yamen Gate, Hankow. It will be treasured by my countrymen in Sydney."

"Sure it will," the buccaneer agreed as he led the way to the house. "But I'm game to bet, Doc, that a bit of roast chicken and pork will make you feel chirpier than all the praying wheels from here to Hullabulloo."

Hayes was not without imagination. He knew what this boy student had endured during his three days' vigil at the helm of his frail craft, days of burning sun and drenching nights with the shadows of man-eating sharks plunging and gliding under the keel of the boat.

His square-rigged brig, *Leonora*, was visible from the northern end of the tradehouse veranda. He paused only a moment to scan her as she rolled in the wash from the incoming tide. The lagoon was shut in from the ocean breakers by glittering walls of coral. Flocks of sunbirds planed over the vessel's yards. One or two figures were visible in her waist. The sound of a sea shanty drifted across the lagoon. Hayes beamed contentedly.

"Those boys of mine are the happiest in the 'pelago,'" he told his visitors. "They're diving for shell, just now. Pearl is fetching big prices in Sydney."

Mrs. Branscombe stared longingly at the brig's snow-white deck, the neatly stowed top-hamper that needed only a brief trimming to put her in sea-going shape.

Inside the spacious dining room of the tradehouse there was rest and comfort for the two weary voyagers. It was not the first time that Bully Hayes had proved himself a better host than man killer. Under his roof a woman was as safe as a cloistered nun.

Roast chicken and soup, bread and wine appeared at the second clapping of his hands. His Chinese cook, Jim Ling, was the best in the islands.

The two visitors ate like famished penguins, while Hayes drank in the shimmering loveliness of the bent head of his lady visitor. Redheads were rare as amethysts among South Sea beauties. Brunettes, he told himself, were as plentiful as coconuts, and just as hard.

"It's good to be alive!" he exclaimed genially. "I've eaten here alone for a hundred nights with only my ugly shadow on the wall!"

The pensive eyes of Mrs. Branscombe went through him. She knew he had killed men and laid islands waste when the grim beast of plunder took possession of him. Yet never in her life had she felt more secure than when he raised his wine glass to toast and pay homage in her hour of misfortune.

After the meal Doctor Lin Toy drew a sheet of thick waxed paper from a pocket in his monkish cloak and wrote on it slowly with a fine pencil. The buccaneer watched closely until Mrs. Branscombe offered an explanation.

"A mere act of courtesy, Captain Hayes. He is invoking a blessing on you and your house."

"Who gets the note, ma'am?"

"It will go into the praying wheel in the hope that the attentions of his spiritual ancestors will be drawn to you."

The buccaneer sat silent in his chair for a space.

"You mean that he will put it in the wheel and then wind it up, ma'am?"

She nodded. "The praying wheel saved us in storm and stress, Captain Hayes. It will save you, too, if you will only have patience. The spirit of Doctor Lin Toy is as chaste as the Morning Star."

Hayes knew more of the Morning Star than he knew about Chinese praying wheels. A man had to get used to Chinamen and their ways. And the Doctor seemed a rather inoffensive chap.

What next?

The question was soon answered. Mrs. Branscombe had to reach Sydney. Her father was a wealthy wool broker who would gladly pay Captain Hayes £150 if he landed her safely at Farm Cove or Dawes Point.

In spite of his temporary pearling operations the offer of £150 for a passage to Sydney was tempting. For an hour or more he considered it in all its bearings on his past and present, and then decided to risk the trip.

At sunset they went aboard the *Leonora* and within a few hours were heading for the open Pacific.

It was a slow, uneventful voyage to Port Jackson. Mrs. Branscombe kept to her cabin amidships, or sat for a brief spell under the for'rd sun-awnings while Hayes and the men in the foretop kept a sharp look out for prowling gunboats of the *Thespis* and *Daphne* class. Their commanders were commissioned to intercept the square-rigged *Leonora* and escort her to the nearest Queensland port where Hayes was due for an inquiry into his last raid on the beaches of Malicolo, which had resulted in the kidnapping of sixty "boys" for the Bundaberg sugar plantations.

Doctor Lin Toy filled in the days poring over an ancient vellum-bound manuscript that dealt with various aspects of the Confucian philosophy. The praying wheel had been installed in his cabin. The mate, Emery, who slept in the adjoining cubicle, complained of the constant shuffling of the prayers in and out of the wheel. The Doc was trying to do good, no doubt, but it would take an eighty-ton flying wheel to put the skipper right with any kind of a recording angel.

A hot westerly was blowing off the Heads when the *Leonora* entered Sydney harbour. Running past the quarantine grounds Hayes made fast to a buoy in Farm Cove. Mrs. Branscombe was ready at the rail with Doctor Lin Toy beside her. She held out her hand to the buccaneer.

"Goodbye, Captain Hayes! You have saved me from misery and hardships."

She stepped lightly down the gangway to the dinghy waiting below.

Doctor Lin Toy hesitated with his hand on the buccaneer's arm.

"Please accept this as a token of my gratitude," he said, slipping a narrow sheet of heavily glazed paper into the other's hand.

It was a piece of the paper on which he wrote his prayers!

Hayes was too dumbfounded to reply. Anger, amusement shook him as he watched the Doctor clamber into the boat beside Mrs. Branscombe. The young philosopher waved from the stern.

"Thanks for the prayer!" Hayes bellowed from the rail.

Lin Toy's answer was scarce audible above the stroke of the oars as the boat shot away.

"Wash it in warm water and dry it in the sun!" he advised.

"Mad as a hatter!" the buccaneer choked, carrying the paper into his cabin, away from the silent sniggers of the crew.

Day broke in warm splendour over the harbour. Flocks of gulls hung about the *Leonora's* galley, as Hayes, after a sleepless night, carried Lin Toy's gift of praying paper on deck where he soaked it in a pan of warm water from the cook's stove.

With the craft of a gold fossicker washing pay dirt, he swirled the water over and around the paper before stretching it in the hot sun to dry.

Of course Lin Toy was crazy, he reflected, watching the steam rising from the tightly stretched strip of thick paper. But even fools had to be listened to at times.

A grey scum became visible on the surface of the paper, that blistered and raised itself with the crackling sound of goldbeater's skin. Through this sudden transparency the face of a stiff-haired man with whiskers became suddenly visible in the left hand corner of the under strip of paper.

Beneath the whiskers was the printed legend.

NEW YORK TRUST AND BANKING CORPORATION
PAY BEARER TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS
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With ineffable care and precision Hayes flattened the dollar bill on the rail of the wheelhouse until every wrinkle and crease disappeared in the warm rays of the sun.

A police launch slid alongside the *Leonora*. A couple of men and a detective-sergeant squatted in her brass-railed stern. The sergeant hailed the buccaneer cheerfully.

"Hello Bully! You're a stranger in these parts! What have you been doing lately?"

Before answering, Hayes threw a handful of choice cheroots into the hands of the nearest officer.

"Doing!" he guffawed at last. "I've just finished washing the face of a bank president."

"I guess some of 'em need a wash, Bully. But joking apart," the sergeant went on, "you don't happen to have seen a couple of wild geese from Batavia, down your way?"

"Geese?" The buccaneer's smiling face was visible through the fumes of manilla smoke. "Give 'em a name, Briscoe?"

"Barney O'Shea and his pal Kitty Molloy."

"Tell me some more, Briscoe? I'm a bad guesser?"

The sergeant's eye went over the trim decks of the brig, the mask-like faces of the crew gathered in the waist. Then:

"The Department's got an idea, Bully, that the two birds flew here on this hooker of yours. O'Shea worked in the American bank at Batavia until he got the run of the safes. Kitty worked with him from outside. Last October he vamoosed with half a million dollars worth of bills and Exchequer bonds."

"Aren't the bills numbered?" Hayes demanded from the brig's mail, his fingers caressing the ten thousand dollar note in his trousers pocket.

"It was O'Shea's job to number them," the sergeant told him. "But the numbers in the book are all wrong. All the ships from Sydney to Shanghai have been gone over, and no sign of 'em. They couldn't have joshed through the ports up north with all those bills on 'em?" the sergeant hazarded.

"Chinky ports are easy, Briscoe."

"Are they? You can't hide bills behind mirrors and in double-bottomed bags, Bully, when you're running through the chink customs. They'd pick out a stolen dollar if you hid it in the eye of a needle. Can't you give us a tip?"

"Just a little one, Briscoe. I brought a young Chinese student and his lady companion from my place and dropped 'em here last night. His little pigtail was made of horsehair."

"Any baggage?"

"An old praying wheel."

The sergeant blinked thoughtfully. Then his eyes sharpened to a glare of dismay.

"You let 'em go?" he bellowed.

"Sure I let 'em go. Anyway they left the old praying wheel behind."

The sergeant swore under his breath.

"A praying wheel's about the only piece of furniture these northern customs would leave alone. Did you squint into it?"

"It was as full of prayers as a Mormon Sunday. Believe me, Briscoe, I never interfere with a man's private beliefs."

The men in the police boat consulted in low tones. The geese had flown, and there was no charge against Hayes pending in Sydney.

"Goodbye, Bully!" the sergeant snorted as the launch sped away. "I hope they left you something?"

"Just an old bloke with a pair of whiskers," the buccaneer sent after him. "I'll now finish washing his face."

"Always thought Bully was a bit nutty!" the sergeant growled.

Perils of the Home

STATISTICS issued recently by the National Safety First Association reveal that even most ordinary everyday occurrences in the home can lead to tragedy.

Of the 11,000 people killed by accidents at home last year, 738 died as the result of falling downstairs; 114 met their death leaning too far out of windows and falling; 62 fell to their death from ladders. Amazing though it may seem, no fewer than 92 persons were killed by falling out of bed.

While only the utmost care can prevent such accidents, there is another measure which men and women with family responsibilities can adopt to ease the hardship which often follows such accidents—that which is caused by money problems. The measure is simple enough. Fill up the forms on page 29 for "The Passing Show's" great Free Family Insurance Gift.

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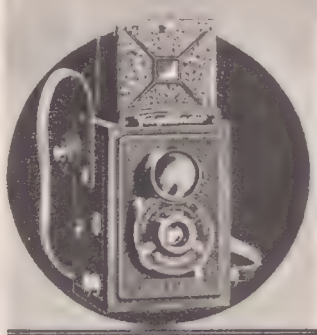

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Passing Show,
June 13, 1936.....

METROPOLITAN COLLEGE
Dept. G7, ST. ALBANS.

An HOUR *for Revenge*

I WAS once an accomplice in what might have been a perfect crime—had the victim died! At any rate I was the unsuspecting means of providing a perfect alibi.

The events I am about to describe took place when I was an art student at the Grande Chaumière studio in Paris.

My greatest friend at that time was a girl called Gina, a fellow student of the Prinet *Cours du Matin*. In looks we were rather similar, both being of medium height, slim, and dark, and we might—at a distance—easily have been mistaken for each other.

The likeness ended there, however, for our characters were totally different, Gina being very temperamental, apt to fly into brief but violent rages over what I considered the most trivial things. But she was very likeable, a good friend, and the time passed happily in each other's company.

We were almost inseparable. We shared rooms in the rue de l'Université, and set off every morning together for the studio. It was a delightful life while it lasted. And to eke out our pocket money we took spare time jobs. I taught English two evenings a week at a night-school in town, and Gina got a job as pianist at a local cinema, playing there every evening except Wednesday.

We shared everything, including our free time—until Jean L. came on the scene. He was a tall, good-looking young student at the Sorbonne, of moneyed people, an inveterate flirt, and he already had something of a reputation in the *quartier*. I disliked him instinctively and remonstrated with Gina at times—fearing that she might be hurt when what I believed to be his real character showed itself. She refused to listen to me, however.

After that, though we still shared rooms, we saw very little of each other. Very occasionally I accompanied the two of them on walks, or went to a show with them. He was the sole topic of Gina's conversation and, for her sake, knowing that nothing would now change her feelings for him, I did my best to hide my dislike.

Two months had gone by in this way when she surprised me by coming in early one evening. She looked very white, utterly miserable.

"Cheer up!" I tried to console her. "Nothing is ever as bad as all that. What's the matter, anyway? Quarrelled with the handsome Jean?"

"Oh, shut up," she said, irritably. "Leave me alone. . . . And if you want us to remain friends," she went on, "don't ever mention his name to me again."

I honestly believed that the matter ended there, and I never gave Jean L. another thought. But, looking back on things, it now seems certain that Gina, even then, must have been planning her revenge.

Weeks after the whole affair had faded from my mind, Gina raced into my room shortly before she was due at the cinema.

"Irene," she gasped, "will you do me a favour?"

"Depends what it is," I laughed. "I mean how much."

"All I want you to do is to take my place at the cinema for one hour, perhaps less. It's terribly important. I've promised to meet someone and it's my last chance—this—person leaves Paris to-morrow. I'm depending on you—please."

"But, Gina," I protested, "even if I were willing, you know I can't play nearly well enough."

"Yes you can. Oh, please," she pleaded. "Just for one little hour, from eight until nine. I swear I'll be back by nine. I'll explain the programme briefly, and I'll leave the music ready. When you've gone through it, play anything until I arrive."

"But what will the manager say?"

"That's just it. He won't see you. Listen. You know the side door? Well, slip in through there. . . . But be careful no one sees you, for goodness' sake, because if we're found out I'll lose my job. *Please*."

It was always difficult to refuse Gina anything, and finally I consented, agreeing to slip in through the side door, change places with her—easy, this, since the piano was well screened from the audience—and play until she came back.

"And there's one other thing," she said, just as she was leaving. "I want you to promise, word of honour, you'll never tell anyone about this."

And, wondering rather at her look of deadly seriousness, I gave the desired promise.

As arranged, a few minutes before eight o'clock, I crept into the cinema and, anxious to do nothing that might cause Gina to lose her job, I made sure that no one saw me. We changed places at the piano with scarcely the loss of a single note.

But no hour has ever felt so long! My arms ached, sure sign of a bad pianist, and long before the time was up I cursed the impulse that had led me to agree to such a mad idea.

The moving light of the screen confused me. I lost my place, dropped the music turning it over, trusted to luck with left-hand chords, and glanced desperately every few minutes at the clock.

At last Gina arrived.

I crept out thankfully, vowing that nothing would ever induce me to repeat the experience.

I turned in early that night and was asleep when Gina came in.

Next morning we both laughed over my experience.

In a fit of violent temper she shot him.

"She was questioned about the Jean L. case, of course."

He went on to tell me how a detective called at the cinema and made inquiries about the girls they engaged as pianists, particularly the one called Gina X.

"He asked me if I was absolutely *sure* she was there all that evening. I said, 'Well, if you call seeing her with my own eyes seated at the piano at half-past eight that night, hearing her with my own ears, proof, certainly I'm sure.'

"'Then that's quite all right,' he told me. 'Good morning!'

"And just as he was about to go I saw the object of our discussion come in at the side door.

"'Wait a minute,' I said, 'here's the young lady herself. Miss Gina!' I called out. 'Come here please, will you?'

"Well, he put some questions to her, and then said there was just one point he'd like to clear up. It seems he was at the cinema that evening. He wanted to know the name of the two pieces she played over and over again at one period. I'd already mentioned that to her myself. Seems she was dreaming, forgot where she was for a while. *Eh bien*, she told him the name of the pieces she played just then, but somehow he still looked doubtful."

He beckoned to the waiter and asked him to bring another drink. "Did you ever hear such rot?" he demanded. "Fancy suspecting anyone with an alibi like that! They must be crazy."

Jean L. did not die. And when he recovered sufficiently to talk he refused to give any information, saying the whole affair was a deplorable accident and that he would bring no charge. And there, the mystery still unsolved, the matter would have ended but for a letter some time later from Gina herself explaining everything.

Briefly, what had happened was this. On the morning of that eventful day she had met Jean L. and had begged him to see her for one last time, promising to return all his letters if he would do so. It was impossible to go on discussing matters in the street so he agreed to meet her in his apartment, alone, that evening soon after eight o'clock.

Leaving the cinema she had walked over to his flat, talked, remonstrated with him, quarrelled, and finally, in a fit of violent anger, shot him. Then, without daring to look at him, believing him to be dead, she had rushed out and away. Running down to the Place Saint-Michel she had flung the revolver in the Seine and then hurried back to the cinema to take my place.

There is no longer any need for secrecy. Jean L. told the whole story mockingly against himself, soon afterwards, at a big party to celebrate his recovery, and Gina, by that time, was too far away for it to reach, or hurt her in any way.

I have now lost touch with her, but many a time I reflect on the odd circumstances that very nearly made me an innocent partner of what might easily have been that rare thing—a perfect crime.

TRUE LIFE STORIES

Ten guineas for *your* True Life Story if you write it yourself in printable form; two guineas if you send us only a summary. That is "Passing Show's" invitation to readers, made because we believe in the old saying that "Truth is Stranger than Fiction."

"What on earth did you play to make them so wild?" she asked, when I told her of the awful moment when I had heard a restless audience stamping its feet.

"The only two pieces I know by heart, 'Rustle of Spring' and 'Over the Waves.' I had to play them at least half a dozen times."

We were still talking when the *concierge's* wife came in. At first we were so busy talking that we didn't hear what she was saying, but gradually the words reached us. I stared at her, stupefied. She was telling us that Jean L. had been found badly wounded in his apartment in the Boulevard Montparnasse.

The newspapers that day, and the days that followed, were full of the mystery. There were the headlines: "Sorbonne Student Shot," "Mystery of Young Student," and no one seemed to doubt that it was a *crime passionel*.

Gina read extracts to me. "In the hope of elucidating the mystery the police are to question the young women with whom he is known to have spent a good deal of his time. An arrest is expected to be made in the course of the next day or so."

She laughed. "Let them question us, eh, Irene?" she said.

A few days later, to my surprise and resentment, Gina disappeared without saying good-bye or leaving her address. I first heard the news of her departure from the under manager of the cinema. He came up to me on the Dome terrace and said that Gina had asked him to say good-bye and that she would write to me shortly. I stared at him, blankly.

"Gone! But where to? It's impossible. Why, we share rooms. All her things are there."

"Well, she's gone all right," he repeated. "It was after she was questioned—well, *you* know."

"I certainly don't. What is it I'm supposed to know?"

It's in "Zoo"

Suppose that when you took the car or motor-bike out for a week-end run, lions, elephants, giraffes, and other assorted big game wandered across the road, jay-walking and even sitting down in front of your bonnet and refusing to move along?

That is what happens to motorists in South Africa's great game preserve, the Kruger National Park. Visits to the preserve by motor-cycle are officially discouraged, and the amazing big-game pictures in the June issue of "Zoo," (now on sale, price sixpence), supply the reason.

One shows a rhino charging a car, others show lions bounding alongside.

At night, too, tourists must enter a cage—while the animals roam around outside.

The whole story is vividly told in pictures in "Zoo."

Enid was admiring the little pearl wreaths for the small bridesmaids. "Yes," sighed Elsie, the Bride-to-be, "but Doris will spoil everything—she's always so dingy looking."

"It's her teeth" thought Enid. "I'll send her some GIBBS Dentifrice. I am sure she'll use that." Doris loved her GIBBS and eagerly cleaned her teeth several times a day.

Giant Decay had been hanging around but GIBBS Archer and GIBBS Fairies soon drove him off and made Doris's Ivory Castles beautifully white and sparkly. So a few weeks later:—

"Doesn't Doris look sweet?" murmured Enid, "her teeth are as white as the little pearl wreath!" "Yes" said Elsie, "it's simply wonderful! *I'm* changing to GIBBS myself!"

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METROPOLITAN COLLEGE
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You're Telling Us!

LISTEN to the still, sad sweet music of humanity in the cry of James Haswell, a Border Lad who seems to have lost the swash-buckling habits of his ancestors, asking with touching humility whether we are serious in suggesting we pay readers half a guinea for their opinions.

It is saddening to come upon such an example of the emotions and the adventurous aspirations of a man being so tightly bound by social inhibitions; if we had an editorial heart, it would most certainly palpitate at the thought of little Jimmie living in perpetual fear of the neighbours' black looks, of the hobbledehoy-guffaws of his colleagues, and his wife's smile of derision. Surely such a man, poor, wee, timid fellow, must have a safety valve to release the stormy vapours of his thoughts, and to what better cause could we devote our soap box than to the deserving, jangled Jim, allowing him to say his piece without fear of contradiction? So up James an' at 'em.

"But do you really give half-guineas for opinions?" asks thoroughly-tamed James, still afraid to bark. "It seems super-generous payment. Usually my expression of an opinion brings punishment, not reward."

"Quite, James. But now you have the chance of saying something, what do you want to say?"

"As a rule, my opinions on gardening meet with laughter, and my wife jeers when I mention housekeeping. People tap their heads when I try to explain the European situation, and if I suggest that a certain film is a flop, I'm told it is filling the cinema every night. On everything I seem to know nothing . . ." So James' protest passes into thin air while he hangs his head in shame.

Such is the humility that will inherit the earth; it is also the picture of a man who has been so belaboured by the cudgels of other people's knowledge that when he has a chance to speak he can think only of his own sores. Go back to your brooding James, but remember in these days when it is easy to appear wise, prosperous and well-bred a fool is soon parted from his folly. They may silence you but they can't steal your sense of humour. Laugh and you will probably laugh alone, but you will enjoy it all the more.

Like most of his countrymen Evan Morgan has a sinister desire for respectability. He examines us in a sterilised Celtic Twilight to find out what people do to earn a good name. It would be futile to debate on the desirability of fulfilling such an ambition; we have peeped through too many keyholes at the wrong moment to believe in men-who-earn-good-names. But we feel deeply hurt by Evan's suggestion that WE might know the secret password that would admit him to this world of stiff-fronted night-shirts, tinsel wings and harps . . . and anyway, Evan, if we told you how to become respectable you wouldn't believe us. Still, we cannot but agree that people are illogical.

When I mention housekeeping.

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"When we are young, people want to kiss us," says bold Mr. Morgan, "when we are old they want to kick us. If we drink, we are called 'topers'; if we abstain we are called 'narrow-minded.' Eat a little and you will be called 'faddy'; eat a lot and you will be called 'greedy.' Dress well and you are accused of 'showing-off'; dress untidily and you will be accused of having no pride. If you give to a beggar you will be told that you are encouraging his fraternity; don't give and you are told you are hard and unfeeling." How can I get to heaven? asks poor bewildered Evan.

Still, these two men who are trying to learn the secrets of other men's hearts by eavesdropping at their own, provide a fitting argument to confound Mr. A. Race when he says "man is apt to despise all except his own lordly self."

But what a poor specimen he really is," adds friend Race, probably thinking of that disturbing figure he saw in the mirror this morning. "A baby is helpless for many years but most animals are capable of getting their own food after a few months. If man in proportion could jump like a frog he would be able to leap to work instead of taking a train, and almost every animal of man's bulk can make a sprinter look a 'dud.' The flea is despised but he does not have to grow his food or amble round to the grocer's for it. No human conception of flying can match the bird for grace and flexibility . . . then man sniffs, thinking he is superior."

A man by any other name is still a man; but give him the power to run as a hare, to jump as a flea, to fly as a bird and you'll no longer have a man. Even friend Race must admit that man has the power to do wonderful things; that he chooses to use this power to invent poison gas, to find new ways of being narrow-minded and mean to his neighbours, and to building battleships instead of houses is not the fault of that great scheme of things of which man is part.

That the human race turned into a stampede is the fault only of the fastest runners who thought they should be forever leaders.

Jump like a frog.

We have grave news of Uncle Joe. Recently there came a letter from Harry Vaughan, of Bootle-by-the-Sea, containing a powerful piece about WOMAN which he declares was found in Sanskrit literature.

"Uncle Joe," we cried, "is it true?"

"No, it isn't," he replied testily. "But did you know that the sarcina is a genus of schizomycetous fungus in which the cocci divide in three planes forming cubical clumps . . .?"

"But Uncle Joe this letter says, 'in the beginning when the great God Twashtri came to the creation of woman he found that he had exhausted the solid materials in making man, so he took the rotundity of the moon, the curves of the creepers, the clinging tendrils, the slenderness of reeds, the bloom of flowers, the lightness of leaves, the timidity of hares, the vanity of the peacock, the gaiety of sunbeams, the weeping of clouds, the fickleness of winds, the sweetness of honey, the cruelty of the tiger, the glow of the fire, the coldness of snow, the chattering of jays, the cooing of doves, the hypocrisy of the crane, and the fidelity of the camel, and compounded these elements into woman.'"

When Uncle Joe recovered consciousness he said our correspondent was using ancient literature for unlawful purposes. If he started telling people what fun you could have reading the classics there would be no more work for professors, modern novelists could no longer re-write century-old stories into best sellers and the censor would go out of business.

Then gallant Uncle Joe, taking his gamp, his binoculars and his knee boots, dashed off to the British Museum to call a protest meeting of those dear delightful bookworms who spend day after day, year after year taking purple patches from the classics.

We have heard nothing further from Uncle Joe, and as his food supply will now be exhausted it is our belief that he was trapped somewhere in that jungle of learning and has been slain, stuffed and put in a glass case there to stand forever representing Mr. Race's despised generic man.

Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed. Address: "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 31 Bow Street, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs. or Miss.

Solution Next Week

CLUES DOWN

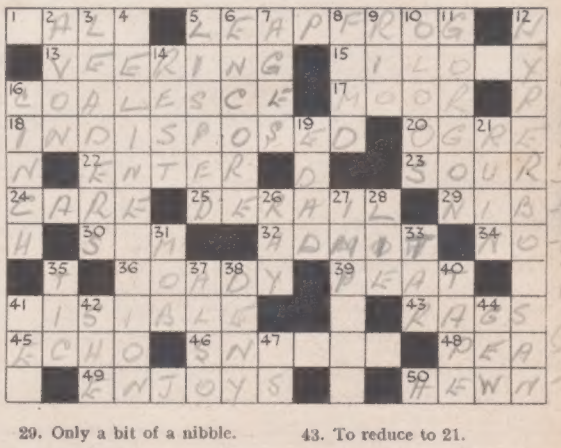
2. A famous one at Stratford.
3. These should be in fore-front.
4. I detail none for repre-sentation.
5. Spoke with affectation or affliction.
6. Call for repetition.
7. Sage may be years. Not necessarily of wisdom.
8. More than payment for a meal.
9. Hebridean isle.
10. I solo for miscellanies.
11. Medusa was one and Stheno another.
12. Born. Pay here (anagram).
14. Desideratum of the weary.
16. A sure thing.
19. Old fashioned ejaculation.
21. State of destitution.
26. Perhaps of sunshine.
27. To call in question.
28. No bed-fellow for truth.
31. Derogatory reference to collection of people.
33. Dark viscous substance.
35. Puts the kick in frantic.
37. And again.
38. Declare negatively.
40. Fillet of tapestry.
41. Not necessarily revolu-tionary.
42. Both genders in this pro-noun.
44. May mean stitch in time.
47. Subtract this from 43.

CLUES ACROSS

1. Elisha was apparently so.
5. Paler fog (anagram).
13. Changing direction.
15. A speaking well of.
16. Fuel in union here.
17. Mud into potentate.
18. Disinclined.
20. Monstrous creature.
22. Go in out of entertainment.
23. Deficiency of sweetness.
24. Race to tend.
25. To put off the lines.
29. Only a bit of a nibble.
30. Biblical strong man here deprived of offspring.
32. Permit to 22.
34. Half note.
36. Opprobious batrachian.
39. Fuel from 40.
41. Moves to laughter.
43. To reduce to 21.
45. Answering sound.
46. With many protuberances.
48. Extract the edible from 39.
49. Does take a delight in something.
50. When is carved.

R	E	D	E	M	P	T	I	O	N	■	V	I	S	A
H	A	I	L	E	■	N	■	O	P	I	N	E	D
O	S	T	L	E	R	■	A	T	T	E	N	D	E	D
M	E	T	■	V	O	I	C	E	■	W	E	I	R	S
B	■	I	T	E	R	A	T	E	D	■	C	■	■	■
I	D	E	A	■	A	N	I	M	O	S	I	T	Y	■
C	A	S	K	E	T	■	V	T	O	N	E	■	S	■
■	R	E	V	E	N	E	D	■	L	A	D	E	N	■
S	T	O	N	E	D	■	E	■	P	■	Y	O	■	■
E	E	L	■	N	■	S	U	N	B	A	T	H	E	R
A	D	D	I	T	I	O	N	S	■	S	■	O	■	E

Last Week's Solution.



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ABDOMINAL CULTURE

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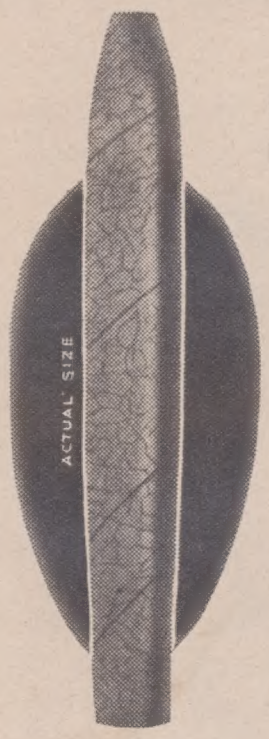

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There's the big match on this afternoon—a special occasion. What about something rather special to smoke? Obviously Wills's Whiffs—mild, cool, real cigar flavour *and* quite inexpensive.

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HAVANA FLAVOUR AT REASONABLE PRICES

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WW21

IF YOUR BREATH HAS A SMELL YOU CAN'T FEEL WELL

Unless 2 pints of bile juice flow from your liver into your bowels every day, your movements get hard and constipated and your food decays unnaturally in your 28 feet of bowels. This decay sends poison all over your body every six minutes. It makes you gloomy, grouchy and no good for anything.

Your friends smell this decay coming out of your mouth and call it bad breath. Laxatives and mouth washes help, but you must also get at the cause. Take Carters Brand Little Liver Pills. They get those 2 pints of bile flowing freely and then you feel on the "up and up." Ask for Carters Little Liver Pills by name and get what you ask for, 1/3d. and 3/-.

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Coro-Shave is the brushless shave that really does shave! No hot water, no lather—yet the cleanest, closest shave you've ever known. And how Coro-Shave soothes a tender skin!

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To Crown Perfumery Co. Ltd. (Dept. 121) 39 King's Road, London, N.W.1. Please send me seven-day sample of Coro-Shave. I enclose 1½d. in stamps for postage and packing. *Your envelope must be sealed and bear a 1½d. stamp.*

Name_____

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COS 3-508

Yours for deposit of **1/-** PAYABLE ON DELIVERY

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And now we offer this luxurious Corselette on new approval terms. Send no money, just complete the coupon below, send full name and address, and pay the postman on delivery the first payment of 1/-. This will be refunded in full unless you are more than pleased. Easy monthly payments if preferred, cost not a penny more. The Ambron Belted Corselette is THE fashionable foundation for modern frocks. It discreetly slenderises the hips and gently maintains an elegant waistline. It is a Corset and Brassiere in one garment. Post the special C.O.D. Coupon to-day.

Elastic insets at hips. 7-in. busk to underbelt. Continuous spiral supports down back. Six suspenders. In fine striped Coutille, pink or white.

8/11 Bargain Price

C.O.D. Coupon - Send no Money

Please send me, on approval, C.O.D., an Ambron Belted Corselette at present Bargain Price of 8/11. My measurements are:—

Bust..... Hips.....

State whether pink or white preferred.

Sizes range from 30 in. to 46 in. bust.

I will pay postman, on delivery, first payment of 1/-, and will remit balance of 7/11 and 4d. to cover postage, either in one sum or by monthly instalments of 2/-. If not satisfied, and I return the garment at once, unworn, you will refund my deposit. ENCLOSE COUPON WITH FULL NAME (MRS. OR MISS) and ADDRESS. *Overseas full cash only.* *Passing Show, 13/6/36, No. 286.*

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13-6-36

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